THE Nation.

BITTER POLITICS
The Editors

ZIMBABWE REELING
Mark Gevisser

THE BIG SQUEEZE
Steven Greenhouse

THE LONG CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
Kevin M. Kruse

MAY 12, 2008
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WHAT NUCLEAR RENAISSANCE?

DESPITE THE HYPE, THE INDUSTRY IS A BUST

CHRISTIAN PARENTI

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Letters

Capital Implosion?

Herndon, Va.
Thanks to *The Nation* and Jeff Faux ["Is This The Big One?" April 14] for having the courage to shine a light on the grim reality this country (and the world) is facing while the mainstream media can only ask "Are we in a recession?" Government of the wealthy, by the wealthy and for the wealthy is never sustainable; such empires always fall from within. The wealthy and powerful have been leading this charge over the cliff with their golden parachutes and laser-guided bombs. Hopefully, we will learn from this very painful lesson that arrogance and greed have no place in a democracy and organize ourselves accordingly.
Beant Singh Khalsa

It Could Break Your Face

Seattle
I was sitting in my car reading Christopher Hayes's April 14 "End the War: Try Again," and after several paragraphs I found myself smiling so hard my face felt like it would break, and honestly I just wanted to shout with righteousness. This feeling reminded me of something I'd read long ago, and I searched my files to find it. It was from Len De Caux's "Armies of the Poor" (Len was a CIO activist from the '30s): "Sometimes I'd hear a Communist speaker say something so bitter and extreme I'd feel embarrassed. Then I'd look around at the unemployed audience—shabby clothes, expressions worried and sour. Faces would start to glow, heads to nod, hands to clap. They liked that stuff best of all." And now I quote Hayes: "To the millions who marched before the war began, to the hundreds of thousands who have protested since…the Bush Administration says, more or less, Go fuck yourself." Well, my face is glowing, my head is nodding and I'm clapping my hands! Thank you, Mr. Hayes, for just plain saying it.
Mary Ann Schroeder

letters@thenation.com

Grassroots ♥ Single-Payer

Houston
Thank you for David U. Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler's "Health Policy Placebos" [April 14]. The underreported story is how much grassroots support there is for a single-payer national health insurance program like HR 676—diversified support at that, from doctors to businesses to individuals. The media instead report on the candidates' proposals, or think-tank market-based plans, as if there are no other serious options. Private health insurance is unsustainable. The task of a business, to make a profit, is at terrible odds with the person who needs healthcare. It's time for a system in which everyone's goals are the same: affordable quality healthcare, with the money used for actual care—not for exorbitant executive salaries, stock dividends, lobbyists or marketing.
Christine Adams

The Art of Saying Nothing

Somerville, Mass.
There's nothing like a Cockburn comeuppance to bring things back to earth ["Beat the Devil," April 14]. Reverend Wright's comments about Palestine told truth to power. Obama took the safe path, responding to style rather than substance—the "perceived injustice" rather than the injustice. He had to. His game is to get elected. Then, hopefully, the fighter will emerge from beneath the patina of "national conversation."
David Berkowitz

Tucson
I loved Alexander Cockburn's column on the "national conversation" and "if you will." My favorite locution, used pre-emptively to silence any critic as denying reality, is "on the ground." Where else do they expect reality to be unfolding: beyond the orbit of Jupiter?
James Sheridan

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Bitter Politics

So here we are again. As has been the case so often this primary season, weeks spent eagerly anticipating some "decisive" result gave way to an election night that merely returned the race to its torturous equilibrium. Six weeks ago polls showed Hillary Clinton up by nineteen points in Pennsylvania. As he has in nearly every state, Barack Obama closed the gap, improving on his performance in Ohio among whites and older voters—but not by enough.

EDITORIAL

If neither candidate's chances of winning the primary was changed Tuesday, something else was. The six-week grind to April 22 featured a sustained descent into what Obama rightly called "the distractions and the silliness" that trivialize serious issues. Instead of scrutinizing the candidates' Iraq exit strategies or economic recovery plans, the press ran endless loops of a few truncated moments of Reverend Wright's sermons, images of Clinton on the tarmac in Tuzla, Obama's "bitter" comments. It all culminated in the infamous "debate" on ABC, whose moderators spent the first fifty-three minutes lingering with prurient seriousness over such details as Obama's lack of a red, white and blue lapel pin.

But it wasn't just the media. In a recent Sunday talk-show appearance, McCain was eager to delve—unprompted—into yet another discussion about Bill Ayers, while Clinton invoked her affinity for her small-town brethren by recounting her girlhood shooting lessons. In other words, multimillionaire McCain, the millionaire pundit class and the millionaire Clintons all spent the last weeks waging a culture war against a man who spent most of his career organizing in or representing the South Side of Chicago. It was enough to make one cling to religion.

What was so dispiriting about this spectacle wasn't its nastiness. Politics in a democracy will always be rancorous; it's the nonviolent means we've established to referee conflicting interests. No, it was the sheer staleness: the run-up to Pennsylvania was dominated by the umpteenth iteration of a clash of fabricated caricatures. On one hand, the out-of-touch, pointy-headed, anti-American intellectuals, with their airs and condescension and contempt for the heartland, and on the other, our mythical hero: the God-fearing, gun-toting, patriotic, salt-of-the-earth reactionary.

It's Nixon's "silent majority" all over again, a category he constructed in order to fence the left into minority status. That the mainstream media have adopted these fictional categories is maddening but par for the course. What isn't par for the course is Clinton's contribution to this effort, her unabashed left-baiting of her foe and her adoption of the vocabulary of backlash conservatism in order to paint the likely Democratic nominee as tainted by his associations with radicals. These tactics threaten to undercut a progressive rationale for her candidacy.

The irony is that Clinton has succeeded in doing what Obama could not. By tirelessly flogging these invented scandals, the Clinton campaign has given concrete substance to what had formerly been airy and abstract pronouncements from Obama about the need to get past "the old politics." Watching the last few weeks of the campaign unfold, one couldn't help but think: Yes, this is broken. This does need to change.

When this primary season began, we cheered the grassroots spirit that had pushed Democratic candidates in a more progressive direction. If the Clinton campaign continues its slouch along the low road, that promise will be severely damaged, as well may be Democrats' chances for victory in the fall. Voters and superdelegates now have to ask, at what cost is Clinton willing to continue this fight?

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Zimbabwe Reeling

COMMENT

Thabo Mbeki, the South African president, likes to make the point that the world is obsessed with Zimbabwe because white farmers have been victims there. Mbeki's argument is that there are many other African countries where black people are oppressed that are not even a blip on the screen of CNN or the BBC. Mbeki is wrong, of course. The worst victims of Robert Mugabe's kleptocracy have been black folk, the poor people without British or South African passports whose only choice is to live, impossibly, with 165,000 percent inflation or to become illegal migrants in South Africa, and who have now been defrauded of the one thing that gave them dignity: their democratic rights.

Mbeki is wrong, too, about why Zimbabwe attracts the world's attention. Certainly, dispossessed white farmers play well, particularly in the right-wing British media. But global interest spotlights Zimbabwe for reasons not dissimilar to those that drew thousands to the antiapartheid movement in the 1980s: it has become the symbol of a larger struggle, this time between an old African way of doing things and a new one.

Mbeki himself called for an "African Renaissance" early in his tenure. Well, one was happening just across the border, where a vibrant new coalition of civil society, working across old ethnic boundaries, coalesced in 1999 into an opposition that formed the first real challenge to Mugabe's effective one-party state and heralded something of a post-neocolonial era in Africa. It had happened already in other countries—specifically, Kenya and Zambia—but there was a spirit to the Zimbabwean opposition that seemed particularly rejuvenating.

In the March 29 elections, if preliminary results posted at polling stations are anything to go by, a slender majority of Zimbabweans were willing to vote against Mugabe. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) under Morgan Tsvangirai won a clear plurality of the vote, although as we go to press it's unclear whether this was an outright majority or there would need to be a second round. (There was a third candidate: Simba Makoni, one of Mugabe's former finance ministers, who ran as an independent.)

What has been happening ever since—the ruling ZANU-PF's refusal to release results and the "recounting" of certain marginal constituencies—is indeed a silent coup, as the MDC alleges. It is the ruling elite's refusal to obey the will of the people and a ploy to allow the ruling party's thugs to intimidate voters away from the MDC if there is a second round. That there is not—yet—carnage on the Kenyan scale (the MDC alleges ten deaths) is testament to the pan-ethnic sophistication of the Zimbabwean opposition. But the intimidation has begun: Human Rights Watch has documented a dramatic increase in torture and violence by the ruling party.

The perplexing thing to outsiders is how susceptible Zimbabweans have been to this kind of intimidation. Their courage during the Chimurenga, as the decade-long war of independence against the white-minority Rhodesian regime is known, is legendary: they were far more willing to go to war than were their neighbors in South Africa. And yet when the unions called a national strike to protest the delay in announcing election

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Noted.

SHARPEN THOSE PENCILS: *The Nation* is holding its annual **Student Writing Contest**. We're looking for original, thoughtful student voices to answer this question: what have you learned from a personal experience that the next President should know before setting the agenda for the country? Winners will receive $1,000, and their essays will be published in *The Nation*. The contest is open to high school and college students. Deadline is May 31. Go to TheNation.com/student for info.

A LETHAL DECISION? Amid a grueling presidential primary season and an especially brutal week in Iraq, the Supreme Court's ruling in **Baze v. Rees** was a one-day news blip. Kentucky's lethal-injection protocol has been found legal; executions around the country may resume. No presidential campaign issued a statement; no reporter asked the candidates for their views on whether a medical cocktail banished by veterinarians as too cruel for animal euthanasia is suitable for killing humans.

Yet there was real importance in *Baze*. Start with Justice **John Paul Stevens**, who in 1976 was part of the seven-vote majority who restored capital punishment. Stevens took the occasion of *Baze* to declare that thirty-two years ago he was wrong: the death penalty is, in fact, "patently excessive and cruel and unusual punishment." At age 88, Stevens has joined two of his colleagues from 1976 in a twilight conversion: **Harry Blackmun**, who renounced "the machinery of death" in one of his last rulings, and **Lewis Powell**, who came to the same conclusion after he retired. Why it took them so long is a matter for biographers, but the curious historical fact is that—with Stevens's change of heart—if the 1976 Supreme Court were resurrected and asked to vote again, the death penalty would lose, 5-4.

Maybe historical what-ifs don't matter much, but the fractured ruling—no more than three Justices signed on to any single opinion—left plenty of what-ifs about the future too. What if executions in other states bring more data about the failures and flaws of lethal injection? What if, as Chief Justice **John Roberts** suggested, states concoct yet another method, with less risk of pain? More litigation is one of the few certainties of this knotted case. Then add the troubled concurrences of Justices Stevens and Breyer, the dissents of Ginsburg and Souter and the likelihood of changes on the Court, and another what-if presents itself: what if the next Justices to join Stevens, Blackmun and Powell don't wait until they are 88? BRUCE SHAPIRO

POETRY PROS: Laurels to **Forrest Gander** and **Rae Armantrout**, whose translations and poems have appeared in *The Nation* in the past year and who were recently honored with 2008 Guggenheim Fellowships in Poetry. As a translator, Gander has been drawn to Latin American poets—recently, the Bolivian **Jamie Saenz** and the Mexican **Coral Bracho**—whose lyrics mint idiosyncratic languages. In Gander's renditions, the relentless talk of the *poète maudit* Saenz veers jaggedly and happily from reticence to flamboyance, from supplication to swagger, while the meditations of Bracho, with their languid, impetuous and sultry descriptions of the depths and textures of language and the physical world, surge and twist across the page. Over the course of three decades and more than ten volumes of work, Armantrout's poems, with their short lines, clipped syntax and terse phrases, have been spare and uncompromising—and also vertiginous and lush—as they unstintingly examine the mirages that surround and deceive us. For all their tonal and topical differences, Gander's translations and Armantrout's poems imagine absence and loss in all its terrifying and mysterious forms. They call to mind, in their own ways, the spooky words uttered by Odysseus upon seeing the deranged behavior of his enemy Ajax (in John Tipton's new translation of Sophocles' *Ajax*): "If you stare hard at life/ you see we're nothing but shadows." Stares can be like stars—a fusion of elements that's incandescent. Theirs are. JOHN PALATTELLA

USAS KICKS ASS: While fans of the Tar Heels were cheering the University of North Carolina baseball team to a season-best ninth consecutive victory on April 20, the two dozen student activists camped out in the historic South Building were seeing only red. It was the fourth straight day they had occupied chancellor James Moeser's office, demanding that the university purchase 75 percent of its light-blue logo gear from factories where workers are paid a living wage and can form unions.

The UNC students are part of a nationwide campaign, led by the campus-based **United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)**, to force universities to adopt the Designated Supplier Program, which requires garment producers like Champs, JanSport, Nike and Adidas and their overseas suppliers to guarantee living wages and labor rights. Students at Appalachian State, Penn State and the University of Montana, where school administrators have opposed the DSP, also organized office occupations in April, and forty-two other universities around the country have already signed on to the program. Reached in the chancellor's office, Montana student **Kendra Kellevig** sounded optimistic. "They definitely don't want the press coverage of students occupying their office and getting arrested," she said of the administration. YASMIN MADADI

PENTAGON PUNDITS: "War is a racket," retired Marine Corps Gen. **Smedley Butler** warned in 1935, and as an April 20 **New York Times** front-page exposé of the Pentagon's war-hawking media apparatus shows, nothing's changed. Under a veneer of objectivity, more than seventy-five former officers-cum-"military analysts," many with current ties to defense contractors cashing in on the Iraq debacle, have sold the Bush Administration's line on the war's progress, regurgitating Pentagon talking points on cable news shows and op-ed pages. *The Nation* had part of this story in the April 21, 2003, issue, when we uncovered the relationship between two NBC News military analysts and a well-connected Washington lobby beating the drums for war. But other outlets are so far ignoring the *Times* report, despite what **Norman Solomon** of **Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting** calls the "outrageous relationship" it reveals between the Pentagon and compliant media. "These are people being paid to impart expertise on military issues, whose opinions are being shaped by the Administration," says **Karl Frisch** of **Media Matters**. A racket indeed.

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results, it was a flop: Mugabe's security apparatus managed to hector nearly everyone back to work. The ZANU-PF government has proven far more adept at intimidation than Rhodesia's white supremacist ruler ever was.

The truth is that a significant minority—more than 40 percent, it seems—voted for Mugabe. It is important for students of African democracy to grapple with this. Do Zimbabweans have some kind of suicidal millenarian impulse? Are atavistic loyalties stronger than reason? Or is it simply that old-fashioned two-step—brainwashing and intimidation—at play? Whichever, Mugabe is not universally reviled. His power is rooted in significant popular support.

That, plus the fact that he and his generals will not voluntarily give up power, means there is really only one solution to the crisis: a negotiated settlement. Of course, this is unjust to the valiant victors of the March poll, just as the Lancaster House agreement in 1979 was unfair to the brave soldiers of the Chimurenga. But the balance of forces dictates that there is now, as then, no other way out.

Tsvangirai has acknowledged this; in a recent statement he called for a "government of national unity." Even though everyone still seems to be fighting over who won the election, the battleground has shifted, almost imperceptibly: now it's about who will play the leading role in some kind of negotiated settlement. Tsvangirai believes that as the victor, he has the right to convene such a settlement. Mugabe works off a different logic: that possession is nine-tenths of the law. What is going on behind the scenes is not only an attempt by Mugabe to seize power but attempts by mediators, including Mbeki, to get both sides to agree to a settlement. Mbeki's preference is for Makoni, whose candidacy he has been tacitly supporting. Although Makoni won no more than 10 percent of the vote, he might win in the horse-trading as a transitional leader acceptable to both sides.

Mbeki and his South African team of mediators seemed for a while to be making headway; they brokered the deal that allowed the election to happen in the first place. But now Mbeki has discredited himself beyond repair by identifying too closely with Mugabe. And the regional Southern African Development Community is too divided to act with singular purpose: Mugabe has very powerful friends, particularly in the even more rotten Angolan regime. The United Nations has, to date, left the matter to the SADC, but Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who was lobbied recently by Tsvangirai at a conference in Ghana, is showing signs of impatience. Surely he would not like his copybook to be blotted, as his predecessor's was by the UN's failures regarding Rwanda, although it is unclear what Ban can do. Sanctions and embargoes seem only to make Mugabe more defiant.

Ultimately, people and not governments or intergovernmental agencies will uproot African tyranny. On April 17 there was a salutary sign of the civil-society power that originally spawned the MDC: the refusal by South African dockworkers to unload a ship full of arms headed for the Zimbabwe Defense Force and the high court interdict obtained by South African clerics to prevent the ship from docking. The ship defied the interdict, which required it to stay in the port until inspection, and fled. Shamefully, the South African authorities did nothing about it.

Meanwhile, as the designated, if discredited, mediator, Mbeki has one unforgettable lesson to teach Zimbabwe from South Africa's experience: a real settlement can be reached only when each side accepts, incontrovertibly, that it cannot win. Tragically, none of the players in the Zimbabwean conflict—least of all Mugabe—has come to this realization. MARK GEVISSER

Mark Gevisser, The Nation's Southern Africa correspondent, is the author of Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

Patriotism, 2008

I backed the war in Nam OK,
Though I used pull to stay away.
A patriot? But can't you tell?
I wear a flag on my lapel.

My company's now based offshore;
We don't pay taxes anymore.
A patriot? But can't you tell?
I wear a flag on my lapel.

That clean air stuff's not meant for me.
I drive a German SUV.
A patriot? But can't you tell?
I wear a flag on my lapel.

We needn't build a grand memorial
To patriots. It's all sartorial.

The World Food Crisis

COMMENT

The only surprising thing about the global food crisis to Jim Goodman is the notion that anyone finds it surprising. "So," says the Wisconsin dairy farmer, "they finally figured out, after all these years of pushing globalization and genetically modified [GM] seeds, that instead of feeding the world we've created a food system that leaves more people hungry. If they'd listened to farmers instead of corporations, they would've known this was going to happen." Goodman has traveled the world to speak, organize and rally with groups such as La Via Campesina, the global movement of peasant and farm organizations that has been warning for years that "solutions" promoted by agribusiness conglomerates were designed to maximize corporate profits, not help farmers or feed people. The food shortages, suddenly front-page news, are not new. Hundreds of millions of people were starving and malnourished last year; the only change is that as the scope of the crisis has grown, it has become more difficult to "manage" the hunger that a failed food system accepts rather than feeds.

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The current global food system, which was designed by US-based agribusiness conglomerates like Cargill, Monsanto and ADM and forced into place by the US government and its allies at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, has planted the seeds of disaster by pressuring farmers here and abroad to produce cash crops for export and alternative fuels rather than grow healthy food for local consumption and regional stability. The only smart short-term response is to throw money at the problem. George W. Bush's release of $200 million in emergency aid to the UN's World Food Program was appropriate, but Washington must do more. Rising food prices may not be causing riots in the United States, but food banks here are struggling to meet demand as joblessness grows. Congress should answer Senator Sherrod Brown's call to allocate $100 million more to domestic food programs and make sure, as Representative Jim McGovern urges, that an overdue farm bill expands programs for getting fresh food from local farms to local consumers.

Beyond humanitarian responses, the cure for what ails the global food system—and an unsteady US farm economy—is not more of the same globalization and genetic gimmickry. That way has left thirty-seven nations with food crises while global grain giant Cargill harvests an 86 percent rise in profits and Monsanto reaps record sales from its herbicides and seeds. For years, corporations have promised farmers that problems would be solved by trade deals and technology—especially GM seeds, which University of Kansas research now suggests reduce food production and the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development says won't end global hunger. The "market," at least as defined by agribusiness, isn't working. We "have a herd of market traders, speculators and financial bandits who have turned wild and constructed a world of inequality and horror," says Jean Ziegler, the UN's right-to-food advocate. But try telling that to the Bush Administration or to World Bank president (and former White House trade rep) Robert Zoellick, who's busy exploiting tragedy to promote trade liberalization. "If ever there is a time to cut distorting agricultural subsidies and open markets for food imports, it must be now," says Zoellick. "Wait a second," replies Dani Rodrik, a Harvard political economist who tracks trade policy. "Wouldn't the removal of these distorting policies raise world prices in agriculture even further?" Yes. World Bank studies confirm that wheat and rice prices will rise if Zoellick gets his way.

Instead of listening to the White House or the World Bank, Congress should recognize—as a handful of visionary members like Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur have—that current trends confirm the wisdom of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's call for "an urgent rethink of the respective roles of markets and governments." That's far more useful than blaming Midwestern farmers for embracing inflated promises about the potential of ethanol—although we should re-examine whether aggressive US support for biofuels is not only distorting corn prices but harming livestock and dairy producers who can barely afford feed and fertilizer. Instead of telling farmers they're wrong to seek the best prices for their crops, Congress should make sure that farmers can count on good prices for growing the food Americans need. It can do this by providing a strong safety net to survive weather and market disasters and a strategic grain reserve similar to the strategic petroleum reserve to guard against food-price inflation.

Congress should also embrace trade and development policies that help developing countries regulate markets with an eye to feeding the hungry rather than feeding corporate profits. This principle, known as "food sovereignty," sees struggling farmers and hungry people and says, as the Oakland Institute's Anuradha Mittal observes, that it is time to "stop worshiping the golden calf of the so-called free market and embrace, instead, the principle [that] every country and every people have a right to food that is affordable." As Mittal says, "When the market deprives them of this, it is the market that has to give." JOHN NICHOLS

Running on Empty

COMMENT

It used to be that only environmentalists and paranoids warned about running out of oil. Not anymore. As climate change did over the past few years, peak oil seems poised to become the next big idea commanding the attention of governments, businesses and citizens the world over. The arrival of $119-a-barrel crude and $4-a-gallon gasoline this spring are but the most obvious signs that global oil production has or soon will peak. With global demand inexorably rising, a limited supply will bring higher, more volatile prices and eventually shortages that could provoke—to quote the title of the must-see peak oil documentary—the end of suburbia. If the era of cheap, abundant oil is indeed coming to a close, the world's economy and, paradoxically, the fight against climate change could be in deep trouble.

Though largely unnoticed by the world media, a decisive moment in the peak oil debate came last September, when James Schlesinger declared that the "peakists" were right. You don't get closer to the American establishment and energy business than Schlesinger, who has served as chair of the Atomic Energy Commission, head of the CIA, Defense Secretary, Energy Secretary and adviser to countless oil companies. In a speech to a conference sponsored by the Association for the Study of Peak Oil, Schlesinger said, "It's no longer the case that we have a few voices crying in the wilderness. The battle is over. The peakists have won." Schlesinger added that many oil company CEOs privately agree that peak oil is imminent but don't say so publicly.

One who does is Jeroen van der Veer, CEO of Royal Dutch Shell. Without using the term "peak oil," van der Veer warned in January, "After 2015, easily accessible supplies of oil and gas probably will no longer keep up with demand."

Of course, peak oil could arrive sooner than 2015; columnist George Monbiot has claimed in the *Guardian* that a Citibank report calculates the date at 2012. But even 2015 leaves a very short time in which to prepare, because modern societies were built on cheap, abundant oil.

"The world has never faced a problem like this," warned a 2005 study funded by George W. Bush's Energy Department. "Previous energy transitions (wood to coal and coal to oil) were gradual and evolutionary; oil peaking will be abrupt and revolutionary."

The United States, with its two-hour commutes, three-car families, atrophied mass transit and petroleum-based food

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system, is most vulnerable to an oil shock. But similar vulnerabilities exist in most industrial societies, not to mention the roaring economies of China and India, where oil consumption is rising faster even than GDP as newly middle-class consumers buy the cars they have long dreamed of.

At first glance, one might think that peak oil would help the fight against climate change. After all, less available oil should translate into less oil consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions. But modern civilization, to borrow George W. Bush's term, is addicted to oil. If peak oil arrives before the addiction is treated, the junkie will seek even more dangerous ways to get his fix.

Indeed, this is already happening. In Canada, energy companies are mining so-called tar sands—a mix of sand, water and heavy crude oil that can be refined into usable petroleum. But burning tar sands is about the worst thing to do if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change because the resulting petroleum has a much greater carbon footprint than conventional oil. Currently, a dozen such projects are under way; projects awaiting approval would quadruple the emissions those projects generate. One encouraging sign: in response to a lawsuit filed by Ecojustice, the top federal court in Canada has temporarily blocked a tar sands project proposed by an ExxonMobil subsidiary on climate change grounds. "This is something which will clearly apply to every single oil-sands project that comes before environmental assessment of any kind," said Sean Nixon, a lawyer for Ecojustice Canada.

More encouragement: some high-level government officials recognize the danger of peak oil and may be contemplating action. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband wants his country to consider creating "a post-oil economy." New York Governor David Paterson has spoken in detail about the imminence of peak oil and what government can do about it: invest in greater energy efficiency in the short term and new low-carbon energy sources in the medium to long term. Plug-in hybrid cars, for example, can get more than 100 miles per gallon—double that of today's generation of hybrids. And if the plug-in hybrids rely on electricity generated by solar, wind or other green energy sources, they fight climate change and peak oil at the same time.

Finally, activists in scores of towns and cities around the world are trying to prepare their communities for the transition to a post-oil economy. Rather than wait for national governments and multinational corporations to save them, these ordinary citizens are examining how their communities can produce their own energy, food, buildings and other essentials using local resources rather than materials that arrive from afar via oil-based transport. "Economic relocalization will be one of the inevitable impacts of the end of cheap transportation fuels," argues peak oil theorist Richard Heinberg. In Britain this movement has taken the form of "transition towns," which seek, in the words of organizer Rob Hopkins, "to design a conscious pathway down from the oil peak." Drawing on the experience of his hometown of Totnes, in Devon, Hopkins has just published *The Transition Handbook*, which explains how other towns can also begin preparing for the post-oil future.

Some of the transition movement's ideas—printing local currency, forming solar buying clubs, building "cob" houses made of mud—may seem quaint, inconvenient or naïve. But nothing is more naïve than assuming that the endless oil that modern societies grew addicted to over the past fifty years will last forever. The day of reckoning appears imminent, and as Hopkins says, "it is better to plan for it than be taken by surprise."

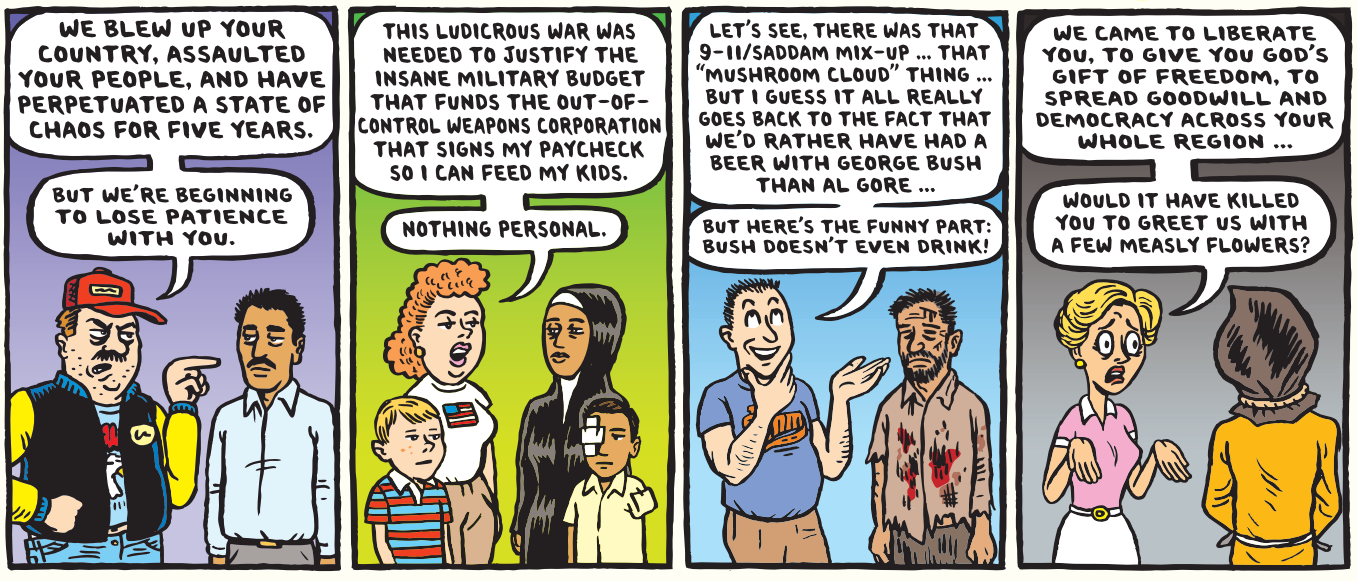
MARK HERTSGAARD

Mark Hertsgaard, The Nation's environment correspondent, is a fellow of The Nation Institute and the author of five books. His next is Living Through the Storm: Our Future Under Global Warming.

Comix Nation

by WARD SUTTON

AMERICANS TELL IT LIKE IT IS TO THE IRAQIS


WE BLEW UP YOUR COUNTRY, ASSAULTED YOUR PEOPLE, AND HAVE PERPETUATED A STATE OF CHAOS FOR FIVE YEARS.
BUT WE'RE BEGINNING TO LOSE PATIENCE WITH YOU.
THIS LUDICROUS WAR WAS NEEDED TO JUSTIFY THE INSANE MILITARY BUDGET THAT FUNDS THE OUT-OF-CONTROL WEAPONS CORPORATION THAT SIGNS MY PAYCHECK SO I CAN FEED MY KIDS.
NOTHING PERSONAL.
LET'S SEE, THERE WAS THAT 9-11/SADDAM MIX-UP ... THAT "MUSHROOM CLOUD" THING ... BUT I GUESS IT ALL REALLY GOES BACK TO THE FACT THAT WE'D RATHER HAVE HAD A BEER WITH GEORGE BUSH THAN AL GORE ...
BUT HERE'S THE FUNNY PART: BUSH DOESN'T EVEN DRINK!
WE CAME TO LIBERATE YOU, TO GIVE YOU GOD'S GIFT OF FREEDOM, TO SPREAD GOODWILL AND DEMOCRACY ACROSS YOUR WHOLE REGION ...
WOULD IT HAVE KILLED YOU TO GREET US WITH A FEW MEASLY FLOWERS?

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Alexander Cockburn

Real Clear Numbers: 101,000 US Casualties a Year

A friend of mine who's a librarian was recently reviewing job applicants. Asked his qualifications in library skills, one man put "machine-gunner." He was a vet who'd served in Falluja. The library is in a state school that, last fall, had 650 such vets enrolled. The young man got the job but soon became irked by what he saw as the trivial preoccupations of his colleagues. He applied for a job at a nearby police department. All over the country police departments are advertising for Iraq vets. Three-quarters of the way through the hiring process, the PD signaled to him that things looked good. Then, in rapid succession, three Iraq vets in the area were involved in lethal episodes: two murders and one suicide. The PD immediately called the young man in for a second psychological evaluation, then nixed him for the job. He's 24. He can't find anything satisfying to do and is thinking of re-enlisting. He's against the war.

Those violent episodes are just part of bringing the war home. It'll be active on the home front for years to come. Just under one in three—31 percent—of those who've been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from a brain injury or stress disorder or a mix of both these conditions.

On April 17 the RAND Corporation released a study of service members and veterans back home from Iraq and Afghanistan. The 500-page study was titled *Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery.* It was sponsored by a grant from the California Community Foundation and done by twenty-five researchers from RAND Health and the RAND National Security Research Division. From last August to January, the team conducted a phone survey with 1,965 service members, reservists and veterans in twenty-four areas across the country with high concentrations of those people. Some had done more than one tour.

The Associated Press and major newspapers outlined the RAND report's astounding numbers and then the story slid from view, which is a very bad thing, since the report disclosed in compelling numbers that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are steadily filling every American community with psychologically and physically mutilated victims of war. Many of them will endure lives saturated with physical pain and mental turmoil or confusion. A proportion will be prone to alcoholism, drug use and violence, sometimes deadly. Their partners and their children will suffer all measure of scarring.

Pentagon data show that more than 1.6 million military personnel have deployed to the conflicts since the war in Afghanistan began in late 2001. The RAND study put the percentage of those suffering from PTSD and depression at 18.5 percent, thus calculating that approximately 300,000 current and former service members were suffering from those problems at the time of its survey.

Some 320,000 service members, about 19 percent, according to RAND, may have experienced a possible traumatic brain injury while in a war zone. These injuries have ranged from concussions to severe head wounds. Julian Barnes, in the *Los Angeles Times*, pointed out in his April 18 story that "a chief difference is that in Iraq and Afghanistan all service members, not just combat infantry, are exposed to roadside bombs and civilian deaths. That distinction subjects a much wider swath of military personnel to the stresses of war."

"We call it '360-365' combat," Paul Sullivan, executive director of Veterans for Common Sense, told Barnes. "What that means is veterans are completely surrounded by combat for one year. Nearly all of our soldiers are under fire, or being subjected to mortar rounds or roadside bombs, or witnessing the deaths of civilians or fellow soldiers."

The RAND report says that about 7 percent suffered from both a probable brain injury and current PTSD or major depression. Only 43 percent reported ever being evaluated by a physician for their head injuries. Only 53 percent of service members with PTSD or depression sought help over the past year. Various reasons were offered to RAND researchers for not getting help, including worries about the side effects of medication, reliance on family and friends to help them with the problem and fear that seeking care might damage career prospects. The news stories tended to lay stress on the fact that almost half of those with brain injuries or suffering from depression and stress disorder were seeking help. As Terri Tanielian, the project's co-leader and a researcher at RAND, told the Associated Press, "There is a major health crisis facing those men and women who have served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Missing amid the brief stir aroused by this devastating report was any adequate editorial commentary, or inquiry to political candidates, about the obvious fact that every month that US troops remain deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan adds inexorably to this terrible total. But discretion is the order of the day, exemplified by Dr. Ira Katz, top mental health official at the Department of Veterans Affairs, who, as CBS News reported on February 13, e-mailed an aide, "Shh! Our suicide prevention coordinators are identifying about 1000 suicide attempts per month among veterans we see in our medical facilities."

Here's how the figures add up, just for Americans. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have thus far produced 300,000 psychological casualties, 320,000 brain injury casualties, plus 35,000 (probably understated) officially reported "normal" casualties. This adds up to 655,000 US casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, an average of just under 101,000 Americans killed or wounded every year since the wars began. If the idea of 101,000 casualties for every extra year in Iraq and Afghanistan gets out and infects the voting public, imagine the effect on the currently torpid national debate over leaving in five years versus fifteen years! ■

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Katha Pollitt

Men of the Cloth

Child abuse. Sexual abuse. Women raised to be baby machines controlled by powerful older men in the name of God. These shockers—and many more—are flagrantly on offer in the spectacle unfolding around the 139 women and 416 children removed by Texas authorities from the Yearning for Zion Ranch in Eldorado. The YFZ is an outpost of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), a breakaway Mormon cult presided over by Warren Jeffs, convicted in Utah as an accomplice to rape and awaiting trial in Arizona for incest and conspiracy. The visuals are riveting: women in pastel prairie dresses and identical pompadour-cum-french-braid hairstyles weeping for their children in state custody; skinny-necked middle-aged men insisting they had no idea it was illegal to marry and impregnate multiple 15-year-olds. There's a feminist angle, a child-protection angle and a civil liberties angle—it isn't clear that the children were in immediate danger, and this drastic and clumsy sweep might well cause cultists to isolate themselves even more. The original impetus for the raid—a desperate phone call from someone claiming to be a 16-year-old girl raped and abused by her 50-year-old "spiritual husband"—is looking more and more like a hoax.

I've written before about the evils of fundamentalist Mormon polygyny, which is thought to have some 10,000 followers in closed communities in Utah, Arizona, Nevada, South Dakota and Texas. I will never understand why the people who attack Islam as oppressive to women have nothing to say about the FLDS. The cultural relativist arguments they reject when applied to foreign countries are even less applicable here: everyone in the story is American, supposedly living under American law. Yet for decades state and local authorities have looked the other way when girls are pulled out of school to be "home-schooled," i.e., prepared for marriage to their uncles, and teenage boys are kicked out of the community so as not to compete with the elder men. Indeed, in areas near FLDS communities, public services have been infiltrated by their members: the public schools teach their religious doctrines; the police are on the lookout for girls and women who try to escape.

Still, appalling as is FLDS's extreme male dominance, there was another news story unfolding at the same time that had certain affinities but got a very different slant: Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States. What a lovefest! We heard endlessly about Benedict's intellect, charm and elegant red shoes. Cat Lovers Appreciate Soul Mate in Vatican made the *New York Times* most e-mailed list. How little the Pope had to do to win applause as a wise conciliator: having begun his reign trying to suppress the priestly pedophilia scandal, he met with the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and reminded Catholics that homosexuals and pedophiles, while both bad, are not the same. Having kept in the liturgy a prayer "for the Jews" so that God might "enlighten their hearts," he visited New York's Park East synagogue, where the rabbi did not similarly call on Catholics to give up their worship of Christ.

But what about women? Oh, them and their messy bodies! As blogger Dana Goldstein pointed out, only Barbara Boxer said boo when Republican Senator Sam Brownback, who supports a constitutional amendment banning abortion, proposed a resolution welcoming the Pope in coded antichoice language and asserting that religion, not the Constitution, was the foundation of our government. (Boxer led a movement that held up the vote for three days until the wording was changed.)

Where were the tough questions about the church's absolute ban on contraception, condoms, divorce and abortion—even to save a woman's life? If it was up to Benedict, we might be more stylish than the plural wives of the FLDS, but we'd be trapped in marriage and have fifteen children just like them. In the United States the Catholic church has lost some of its moral authority—thank you, pedophile priests—but it has more temporal power than you might think. Around 12 percent of US hospitals are church-affiliated, which entitles them to refuse modern reproductive healthcare to women. The church is the major opponent of the drive to make health insurance plans cover birth control, forcing women to pay up to $600 out of pocket every year for contraceptives. Along with evangelical Protestants, it is the main force behind every attempt to restrict abortion, defeat prochoice politicians, make contraception and the morning-after pill harder to get, promote false and sexist abstinence-only education and discourage the use of condoms to prevent HIV by spreading unfounded doubts about their effectiveness.

Catholic charities do a lot of good, but the Vatican is a major obstacle to the advancement of women's human rights. In Nicaragua and El Salvador it recently won a total ban on abortion that has already led to dozens of deaths. In Chile it defeated President Michelle Bachelet's plan to give out emergency contraception gratis. In Italy, Poland and elsewhere in Europe it works night and day to make abortion illegal or hard to obtain. In AIDS-plagued Africa its opposition to condoms, contraception and abortion rights has cost millions of lives. None of this is as titillating as pastel-swathed "sister wives" and their vast log-cabin dormitories, but it affects almost everyone on the globe. FLDS men have many wives and the Pope has none, which goes to show there's more than one way to keep women pregnant and in their place.

* * *

Vacation From War. The Bosnian Initiative Frankfurt is a German group that brings together Serb, Croat and Bosnian children for two weeks of fun, safety and friendship. The program now includes young people from Israel and Palestine, who get to know one another beyond stereotypes. $150 makes you a godparent, but donations of any amount are warmly welcomed. Make checks out to "Vacation From War" and mail them to me at *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. ■

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The Nation.

WHAT NUCLEAR RENAISSANCE?

The nuclear industry isn't going anywhere. It's too costly and won't save us from global warming.

by CHRISTIAN PARENTI

If you listen to the rhetoric, nuclear power is back. Smashing atoms will replace burning carbon-based coal, gas and oil. In the face of a disaster movie–like future of runaway climate change—bringing drought, floods, famine and social breakdown—carbon-free nukes are cast as the *deus ex machina* to save us at the last minute.

Even a few greens support nuclear power—most famously James Lovelock, father of the Gaia theory. In the popular press, discussion of nuclear energy is dominated by its boosters, thanks in part to sophisticated industry PR.

In an effort to jump-start a "nuclear renaissance," the Bush Administration has pushed one package of subsidies after another. For the past two years a program of federal loan guarantees has sat waiting for utilities to build nukes. Last year's appropriations bill set the total amount on offer at $18.5 billion. And now the Lieberman-Warner climate change bill is gaining momentum and will likely accrue amendments that will offer yet more money.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) expects up to thirty applications to be filed to build atomic plants; five or six of those proposals are moving through the complicated multi-stage process. But no new atomic power stations have been fully licensed or have broken ground. And two newly proposed projects have just been shelved.

The fact is, nuclear power has not recovered from the crisis that hit it three decades ago with the reactor fire at Browns Ferry, Alabama, in 1975 and the meltdown at Three Mile Island in 1979. Then came what seemed to be the coup de grâce: Chernobyl in 1986. The last nuclear power plant ordered by a US utility, the TVA's Watts Bar 1, began construction in 1973 and took twenty-three years to complete. Nuclear power has been in steady decline worldwide since 1984, with almost as many plants canceled as completed since then.

All of which raises the question: why is the much-storied "nuclear renaissance" so slow to get rolling? Who is holding up the show? In a nutshell, blame Warren Buffett and the banks—they won't put up the cash.

"Wall street doesn't like nuclear power," says Arjun Makhijani of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. The fundamental fact is that nuclear power is too expensive and risky to attract the necessary commercial investors. Even with vast government subsidies, it is difficult or almost impossible to get proper financing and insurance. The massive federal subsidies on offer will cover up to 80 percent of construction costs of several nuclear power plants in addition to generous production tax credits, as well as risk insurance. But consider this: the average two-reactor nuclear power plant is estimated to cost $10 billion to $18 billion to build. That's before cost overruns, and no US nuclear power plant has ever been delivered on time or on budget.

As Dieter Helm, an Oxford professor and leading economic expert on energy markets, has found, there never has been and never will be a nuclear power program totally dependent on the market.

Sixty years ago, the technology was swathed in manic space-age optimism—its electricity was going to be "too cheap to meter." While that wasn't true, nuclear power did serve a key role in the cold war: spent nuclear fuel rods are refined for weapons-grade plutonium and enriched uranium. That fact aside, rarely has so much money, scientific know-how and raw state power been marshaled to achieve so little. By some estimates, an investment of several hundred billion dollars has led

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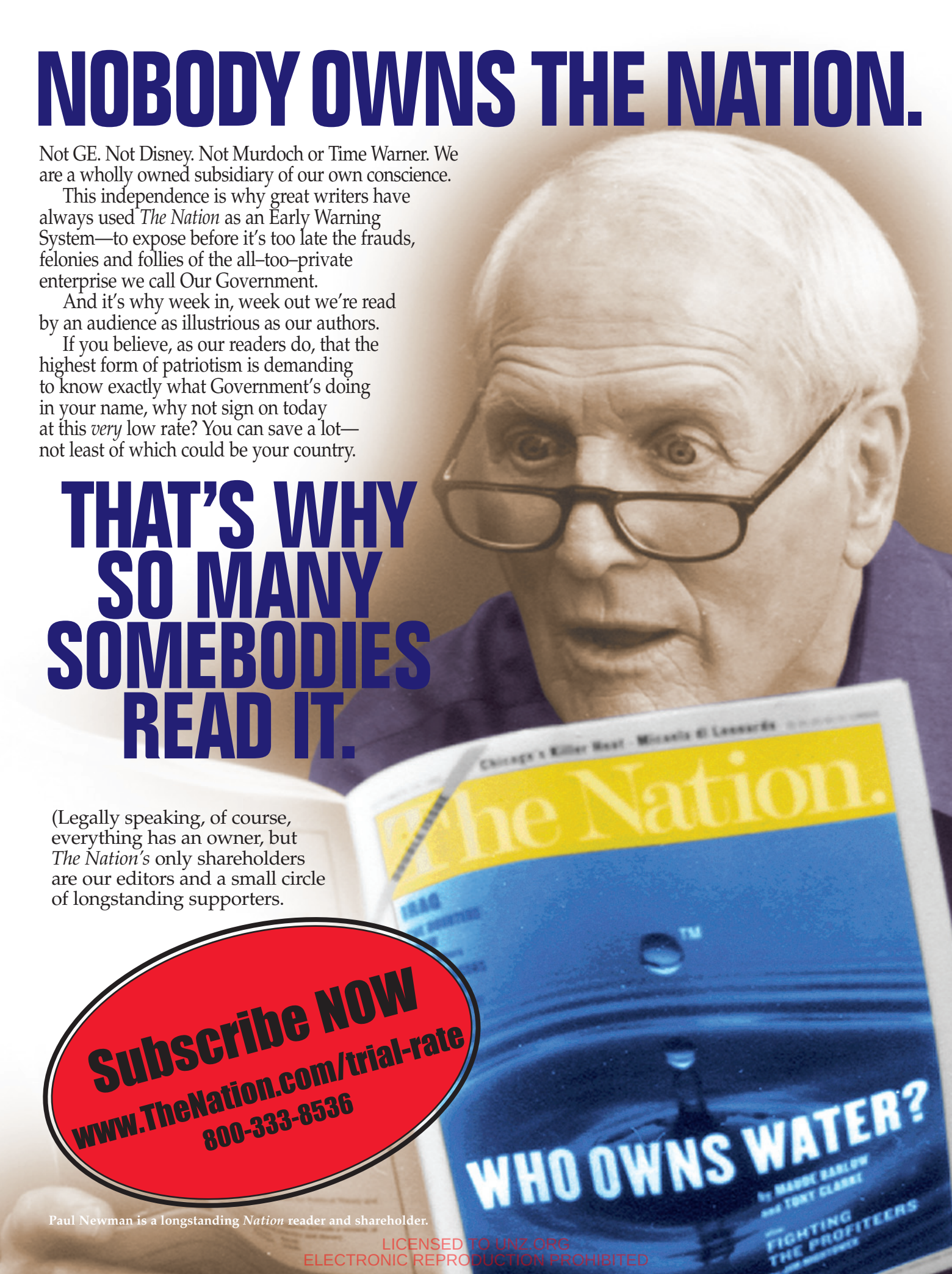

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to a US nuke industry of 104 operating plants—about a quarter of the global total—that produces a mere 19 percent of our electricity.

In fact, the sputtering decline of nuclear power has been one of the greatest industrial failures of modern times. In 1985 *Forbes* called the nuke industry "the largest managerial disaster in history."

Atomic optimism run amok caused the largest municipal bond default in US history. In 1983 Washington Public Power Supply System abandoned three nuke plants in midconstruction. The projects were plagued by massive cost overruns—one infamous section of piping was reinstalled seventeen times, safety inspections were blatantly ignored, incompetent contractors were allowed to continue work and on and on. When the project finally died, unfinished costs had ballooned to $24 billion, and the utility walked away from $2.25 billion worth of bonds.

That project, like many others, drowned in the financial riptides of rising interest rates that were the central feature of the "Volcker recession" of the early '80s. (That was when Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker smashed inflation by jacking the Fed's interest rate from 8 percent in 1979 to more than 16 percent in 1982.) But nukes were also killed by the corruption and incompetence that so often plague large state projects, like Boston's Big Dig, the New Orleans levees, space-based weapons systems and Iraq's reconstruction.

Another reason atomic energy is so expensive is that its accidents are potentially catastrophic, and activists have forced utilities to build in costly double and triple safety systems. Right-wing champions of atom-smashing blame prohibitive costs on neurotic fears and unnecessary safety measures. They have a point in that safety is expensive, but safety is hardly excessive—details on that in a moment.

More important is the fact that nuclear fission is a mind-bogglingly complex process, a sublime, truly Promethean technology. Let's recall: it involves smashing a subatomic particle, a neutron, into an atom of uranium-235 to release energy and more neutrons, which then smash other atoms that release more energy and so on infinitely, except the whole process is controlled and used to boil water, which spins a turbine that generates electricity.

In this nether realm, where industry and science seek to reproduce the process that occurs inside the sun, even basic tasks—like moving the fuel rods, changing spare parts—become complicated, mechanized and expensive. Atom-smashing is to coal power, or a windmill, as a Formula One race-car engine is to the mechanics of a bicycle. Thus, it costs an enormous amount of money.

Worldwide, about twenty nuclear power plants are being built, but most are in Asia and Russia and are closely linked to nuclear weapons programs. Japan and France have large nuke programs, but both countries heavily subsidize their plants, use a single design and built their fleets not to make profits but to ensure some minimum strategic energy independence and, for France, to build an atomic arsenal.

Even if a society were ready to absorb the high costs of nuclear power, it hardly makes the most sense as a tool to quickly combat climate change. These plants take too long to build. A 2004 analysis in *Science* by Stephen Pacala and Robert Socolow, of Princeton University's Carbon Mitigation Initiative, estimates that achieving just one-seventh of the carbon reductions necessary to stabilize atmospheric CO_2 at 500 parts per billion would require "building about 700 new 1,000-megawatt nuclear plants around the world." That represents a huge wave of investment that few seem willing to undertake, and it would require decades to accomplish.

None of this has stopped the Bush Administration and Congress from channeling more money toward nukes. The current push to build nukes began in 2002, when the Administration launched its Nuclear Power 2010 program, which sought to spur construction of at least three major nuclear power plants. Then came the US Energy Policy Act of 2005, which offered three major forms of subsidy. New nuclear power plants could get production tax credits, federal loan guarantees and construction insurance against cost overruns and delays—together worth $18.5 billion.

The notion that nukes make sense and are the version of green preferred by grown-ups is being conjured by a slick PR campaign.

The notion that nukes make sense and are the version of green preferred by grown-ups is being conjured by a slick PR campaign. The Nuclear Energy Institute—the industry's main trade group—has retained Hill and Knowlton to run a greenwashing campaign.

Part of their strategy involves an advocacy group with the grassroots-sounding name the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition. At the center of the effort are former EPA chief Christine Todd Whitman and former Greenpeace co-founder turned corporate shill Patrick Moore. (Moore is also a huge champion of GMO crops, which are notorious for impoverishing farmers in developing economies and using massive amounts of pesticides.) The industry also places ghostwritten op-eds under the bylines of scientists for hire.

All the major environmental groups oppose nuclear power. But the campaign is having some impact at the grassroots: the online environmental journal *Grist* found that 54 percent of its readers are ready to give atomic energy a second look; 59 percent of Treehugger.com readers feel the same way. In other words, people who understand climate change are feeling downright desperate.

But even the Oz-like magic of corporate spin, public subsidies and presidential speechifying have their limits. In late December the man whose name is synonymous with sound money turned his back on nuclear power.

Warren Buffett's MidAmerican Nuclear Energy Company scrapped plans to build a plant in Payette, Idaho, because no matter how many times its managers ran the numbers (and they spent $13 million researching it), they found that it simply made no sense from an economic standpoint.

Christian Parenti is a Nation *contributing editor.*

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South Carolina Electric and Gas has also suspended its two planned reactors, citing costs as the key factor. But the company says, "We remain very upbeat about the future of nuclear power."

If a nuke plant breaks ground soon, it will likely be NRG Energy's double-reactor plant, set to be erected in South Texas. But that one has also been delayed.

The fact that new nukes make little economic sense does not mean that old nukes are not profitable. In fact, these nightmarishly complex radioactive boondoggles have recently been turned into cash cows. Utilities achieved this remarkable transformation the old-fashioned way—they used socialism.

Beginning in the 1990s, most American energy markets were deregulated one state, one region at a time. In the process many old utilities were broken up into different firms: some generated power, others sold it, still others handled transmission. One of the crucial details of deregulation was allowing utilities to pass on to rate payers the "stranded costs"—the outstanding mortgage payments of their nuclear power plants.

Perhaps the most egregious example of this occurred in California. In 1996 the State Assembly passed legislation—written by utility lobbyists—that allowed Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric to hold rates high as prices dropped nationally. The two utilities were on target to receive $28 billion over four years. This money would pay off the stranded costs of the Diablo Canyon and San Onofre atomic plants. Halfway through the deal the California power crisis hit and deregulation was put on hold—utilities were forced to stop selling off their assets, and third-party speculation in energy markets was halted. But the state floated bonds to mop up the remaining stranded costs.

Old nuke plants have been turned into cash cows. Utilities achieved this remarkable transformation the old-fashioned way: they used socialism.

Similar deals were struck across the country. Once unburdened of old debts, the nuke plants—now having relatively low overhead costs—became valuable assets. A new generation of firms began buying them up. By 2002 ten companies owned seventy of the nation's 104 reactors. Among the big players in this game are Exelon, Entergy and Dominion Resources.

Many of the old plants went for a song. A particularly disturbing example of this is Vermont Yankee, a thirty-five-year-old reactor purchased by Entergy seven years ago for a mere $180 million. That's about half the price it would cost to build an equal-sized coal plant or wind farm.

Now Entergy is trying to run the power station as hard and as long as possible. In 2006 it received approval to increase power output at the plant by 20 percent. This "uprate" means the plant operates with 20 percent more pressure, heat and flow. And in just one year it earned Entergy $100 million in profits. Over the last decade, almost all US nuclear power plants have received uprates, but few match Vermont Yankee's full-throttle, 120 percent capacity.

Just after the uprate, one of Vermont Yankee's twenty-two cooling towers collapsed. That's right—it crumbled and fell over. Entergy officials said the collapse "baffled" them. The plant's spokesman, Rob Williams, admitted that "our inspections were not effective enough." Reached by phone, Gregory Jaczko, a commissioner at the NRC, admitted that the collapse "didn't look good." But he went on to reassure the public that the plant is essentially safe.

Now Entergy is petitioning the NRC to extend its operating license so that it can run the old plant for twenty years longer than was intended. Nationally, forty-eight facilities have had their licenses extended. In fact, despite critics' arguments that aging plants pose serious dangers, no license renewal requests have ever been denied.

"The NRC falls all over itself to facilitate the industry," says Ray Shadis, a consultant who has worked for both environmental groups and on NRC panels and research projects. The Project on Government Oversight and other watchdog groups point to a revolving door between the commission's staff and the nuclear industry. To take just one example, in 2007 former commissioner Jeffrey Merrifield joined the Shaw Group after spending his last months on the commission pushing to ease restrictions for precisely the type of construction activities that were the Shaw Group's specialty.

Diana Sidebotham, an antinuclear activist in Putney, Vermont, twenty miles north of the Vermont Yankee plant, thinks Entergy and the NRC are courting disaster. In 1971 Sidebotham helped found the New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution, and she has been trying to shut down nuclear plants ever since. Her hillside farm looks out over the ridge lines of the Connecticut River Valley.

"One of these days a plant will blow," says Sidebotham, with just a touch of a genteel but steely New England accent. "And when it does, it will cause a great many deaths and widespread suffering, not to mention extraordinary economic damage."

Accidents do happen. In 2002 the Davis-Besse Nuclear Plant in Ohio was forced to close for two years after inspectors found a football-sized corrosion hole in the reactor's six-inch-thick steel cap. The plant was very close to a major accident. Repairs cost $600 million.

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama says he opposes any more relicensing of old nuclear plants. His rival Hillary Clinton has stopped just short of saying that. However, as was reported by the *New York Times*, Obama has close ties to the nuclear industry, particularly the Illinois-based Exelon, which has contributed at least $227,000 to his campaigns. Two of his top advisers have links to the firm, including his chief strategist, David Axelrod, who was a consultant for Exelon. Obama voted yes on the 2005 Energy bill, which lavished subsidies on oil, coal, ethanol and nukes; Senator Clinton, like almost half the Senate Democrats, voted against it. The Obama campaign says that as President he would not cut nuclear subsidies, only that he would boost subsidies for green power.

Activists like Sidebotham say the real issue is not how to build more nukes but how to handle the old, decrepit plants

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and their huge stockpiles of radioactive waste. Most of the atomic plants in this country are reaching the end of their life span; seventeen have been decommissioned. And increasingly the question is what to do with the accumulated waste—the extremely radioactive spent fuel rods. This is dangerous stuff. If exposed to air for more than six hours, spent fuel rods spontaneously combust, spewing highly poisonous radioactive isotopes far and wide. This spent fuel will be hot for 10,000 years.

Since 1978 the Energy Department has been studying Yucca Mountain in Nevada as a possible permanent repository for atomic waste. But intense opposition has held up those efforts. In the meantime, the partially burned uranium is stored at the old power plants, in pools of water called "spent fuel pools." Lying near great cities, on crucial river systems, in small rural towns, these pools are potentially a far greater risk than a reactor meltdown. Scenarios for how terrorists might attack and drain them range from driving a truck bomb to crashing an explosive-laden plane into them.

Just after 9/11, when security at nuke plants was supposed to be high, lead pellets started raining down on the containment structure and guard shack at Maine Yankee, in Wiscasset. (The plant has since been decommissioned.) A group of four men in camouflage, armed and intent on killing, had infiltrated into a swamp and were firing weapons from somewhere in the reeds. This "cell" turned out to be four local duck hunters who had no idea they were hitting the power plant.

Their foray against innocent mallards proved just how easy an attack could be. Activists demanded, and got, a safety review, which led to a shockingly blunt NRC document called "Report on Spent Fuel Pool Accident Risk," or NUREG-1738. The report found that containment structures, such as that at Vermont Yankee, "present no substantial obstacle to aircraft penetration." According to the NRC, a fire in the spent fuel pool at a reactor like Vermont Yankee (which stores 488 metric tons of spent fuel) would cause 25,000 fatalities over a distance of 500 miles if evacuation was 95 percent effective. But that evacuation rate would be almost impossible to achieve. The NRC claims to have the threat of terrorism under control, but for reasons of national security it can't explain how. And after 9/11 it admitted, "At this time, we could not exclude the possibility that a jetliner flying into a containment structure could damage the facility and cause a release of radiation that could impact public health."

Humanity's Faustian bargain with atomic power is a story still in its early stages. No one knows how long nuclear facilities will last or what will happen to them during future social upheavals—and there are bound to be a few of those during the next 10,000 years.

This much seems clear: a handful of firms might soak up huge federal subsidies and build one or two overpriced plants. While a new administration might tighten regulations, public safety will continue to be menaced by problems at new as well as older plants. But there will be no massive nuclear renaissance. Talk of such a renaissance, however, helps keep people distracted, their minds off the real project of developing wind, solar, geothermal and tidal kinetics to build a green power grid. ■

Mill Hill Populism

Meet the new face of economic politics in post-NAFTA North Carolina.

by BOB MOSER

Biscoe

PURPLE AMERICA

It's a bright, mellow, short-sleeve April evening in the troubled pinelands of south central North Carolina. Except for the waspish drone of lawnmowers and the occasional whoosh of a car sliding along Highway 220, this town of 1,700 is almost eerily quiet—partly because, with gas costing what it does, people can't afford to do much driving around. But it's mostly because of the big yawning silence at the center of Biscoe, where the mill used to be.

"This was the old Springs plant," says Larry Kissell, pointing up a street formerly known as Mill Hill to a sprawling, low-slung series of connected buildings showing no sign of life. "It had, in its heyday, seven, eight hundred people." That's almost half the town's population. "People weren't getting rich, but there were good jobs. Good benefits. And of course it's gone. Just the heart and soul of Biscoe. This is one of those mills, they'd blow the whistle at 7 and 12 and 3—you always knew what time it was, based on the mill whistle."

AP/CHUCK BURTON

Larry Kissell, who is running for Congress this year, pumps gas during his 2006 race.

The Springs plant was an early casualty in the outsourcing plague that began to hit North Carolina after NAFTA and accelerated in this decade—and has socked the textile-heavy 8th Congressional District like a series of never-ending tornadoes. "Textiles were the sacrificial lamb" in NAFTA, says Kissell, a Democrat who's running, for the second time, to become Congress's first Gentleman from Biscoe. "I think everybody knew that was gonna happen."

But nobody predicted just how rough it was going to get down here, or how fast. North Carolina, first in the South for

Bob Moser is a Nation *contributing writer.*

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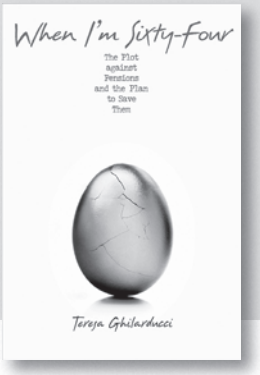

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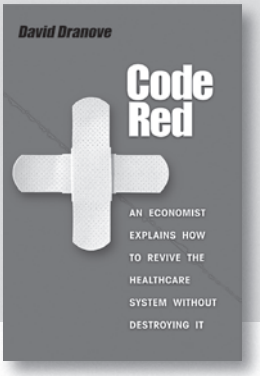

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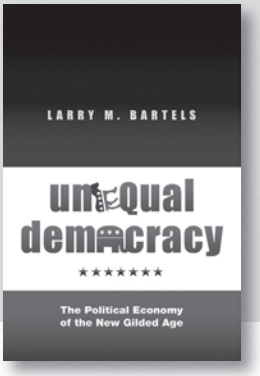

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its share of jobs in manufacturing, long benefited from a form of outsourcing. Decades ago Northern manufacturers shifted jobs to low-wage, Southern states with severe restrictions on organized labor. Now the "old economy" parts of all these states are reeling from the post-NAFTA version of outsourcing. Since 1993 North Carolina has bled more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs, according to state government estimates—one-fourth of its total. The pace of closures isn't slacking, either. Last year 10 percent of the state's textile jobs were lost, with at least 10,000 more manufacturing workers out of luck. In Biscoe after Biscoe, unemployment keeps climbing. Even in relatively prosperous Cumberland County, with its two expanding military bases, Wal-Mart is the number-one private employer. "Good jobs are coming to North Carolina," says Kissell. "They're just not coming here."

It's a gnawingly familiar story in too many communities up North. Down here, people are still in shock. And nobody speaks for them more truly than Kissell. As the Democratic presidential campaign heads toward a showdown in North Carolina on May 6, the candidates—who've been beating the populist drums vigorously but not always convincingly—would do well to take a listen. And maybe take a stroll down Mill Hill.

Democrats have to walk a tricky populist tightrope in North Carolina, balancing between free trade's winners and losers.

Now a high school social studies teacher, Larry Kissell previously worked twenty-seven years in an even larger (and now closed) textile plant in neighboring Star. Kissell hinged his dark-horse campaign in 2006 on his intimate understanding not only of how people have been kicked in the pocketbook but in the gut as well. "We didn't have time to transition," he says, ambling down Mill Hill for an hour's worth of door-to-door campaigning. "It was gone. It was gone. And so much of the structure of the town just left us."

Kissell was one of the luckier ones: a Wake Forest University graduate who was able to land a job at East Montgomery High when the end was nigh for his plant. But when he decided to challenge four-term incumbent Robin Hayes in 2006, Kissell's only previous elected offices had been president of the Biscoe Lions Club and deacon of the First Baptist Church of Biscoe. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) bet its North Carolina money on Heath Shuler, the religious right-winger and former star quarterback who unseated an ethics-plagued mountain Republican in the 11th District. But Hayes, the eighth-richest person in Congress thanks to a textile fortune, was clearly vulnerable. A genial back-bencher in Washington, he had infuriated many in the district by casting a deciding vote, in a midnight change of heart, for the Central America Free Trade Agreement—after having declared he was "flat-out, completely, horizontally opposed to CAFTA." Now he was facing a guy whose job had landed in Mexico and whose campaign war cry was "NAFTA plus CAFTA equals SHAFTA."

With help from an army of volunteers, young and senior, Kissell peddled his message relentlessly from door to door, helped in part by the state party's grassroots organizers, funded as part of the DNC's fifty-state strategy. His real-guy politics lit a fire under disaffected folks like Rhonda Quador of Fayetteville, whose husband had done two tours in Iraq by the time she met Kissell early in the campaign. "He listened to me," she says. "That was my biggest selling point." Quador's father had lost his textile job too, in 1985. "You're asking a man who spent his entire adult life in one plant—you're taking away his identity," she says. Quador, a lapsed Republican, spent about twenty hours a week phone-banking and knocking on doors last time out; on election eve, she says, "I stood in the pouring rain, eight and a half months pregnant, for eight hours for this man." It wasn't because they saw eye to eye on everything. "I'm a Southern Baptist, very conservative in my religious beliefs. But the Bible says do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You don't treat people this way. You don't treat our military as expendable. You don't treat working people like they're outdated."

Kissell called for a phased, one-year withdrawal from Iraq and laid out ambitious plans for recruiting heavy manufacturing and new industry to rural areas and creating thousands of "green-collar jobs." But the thrust of his campaign was old-time, shoe-leather populism, delivered in a variety of low-cost, high-media ways that earned shout-outs from both Lou Dobbs and DailyKos. "When you're running against an incumbent who can outspend you like that, you have to be creative," Kissell says. The campaign's most successful stunt involved Kissell pumping gas for $1.22 a gallon—the price when Hayes was first sent to Washington. Kissell gestures down Mill Hill, past the small houses and neat yards where white, black and Hispanic families eke out their lives. "We had two lanes of cars going all the way down the hill, and back behind the mill, as far as you could see," he says, still amazed.

All the populist energy and empathy in the world couldn't quite make up for Kissell's dearth of funds. He fell short by just 329 votes—and announced, as he conceded, that he was running again. This time, with the economic tornadoes still striking his district and its 30 percent black population registering to vote in record numbers—a major emphasis of Barack Obama's North Carolina campaign—the DCCC is making the 8th District a target. The money will buy Kissell some much-needed big media, but it won't change the way he walks the populist talk.

"How can you know what's going on without knocking on these doors?" Kissell says, tromping through another soft green lawn, beaming at an elderly black couple kicking back on their front porch. "How can you know what these people are going through without talking to them?"

There's been no shortage of populist oratory during the Democratic primaries, and senators Clinton and Obama have pumped it up several notches in recent weeks. If she's not rarin' to go hunting, Clinton is telling the folk, as she did recently in industrial Winston-Salem, "I want to have an emphasis on manufacturing again. I believe you can't have a strong economy if you don't make anything anymore." And if Obama's not making an ill-advised attempt to bowl—or

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Dr. Brettell, Professor of Aesthetic Studies at The University of Texas at Dallas, is a teacher and curator of international renown. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Yale, and Northwestern universities; a Visiting Fellow at the Getty Museum; a board member of the Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation; curator of European Painting at The Art Institute of Chicago; coordinator and founder of FRAME, the French/Regional/American Museum Exchange; and is Senior Advisor for International Art at the National Gallery of Australia.

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offering an even more ill-advised diagnosis of the white working class's emotional state—he's shaking a fist at Washington and trying to make it clear that he doesn't just feel people's pain, he gets it. Even in his infamous San Francisco soliloquy, Obama had—before his "bitter" comment—been waxing forth in a populist vein about small towns where "jobs have been gone now for twenty-five years and nothing's replaced them."

Clinton, who's long trailed her opponent by double digits in North Carolina polls, has pinned her campaign here on rural areas and small manufacturing cities. "I know that North Carolina has lost a lot of jobs," she acknowledged in a recent talk at Wake Technical Community College. Clinton has proposed an especially ambitious and expensive job-retraining program. She's dutifully wagged a populist finger at "incentives in our tax code for companies to ship jobs overseas, no-bid contracts for companies like Halliburton, tax cuts for billionaires, free rides for predatory lenders," and other fat targets like Wall Street. But, much like Obama, she walks a tricky populist tightrope in North Carolina—as the dominant Democrats do statewide.

A Democrat can't win here without appealing to financial, tech and university workers—many of them nonnative and registered independent—who crowd the fresh, tidy developments around Raleigh and Charlotte. These folks, as Ruy Teixeira has written, tend to be tax-sensitive and concerned about government waste, but not ideologically antigovernment. They're churchgoers but socially moderate, more worried about good schools than moral values. And while "they are not anti-business…they do hold populist attitudes toward corporate abuse and people who game the system." There are plenty of commonalities with what working-class voters in Democrat-heavy districts like the 8th are looking for. To make that dual appeal, successful Democrats, like two-term Governor Mike Easley, have typically been "modernizers" more than "progressives" in a national sense. They pound the drums, with sometimes numbing repetition, for their mantra of better schools, better government and better jobs, and keep elections focused on economic rather than cultural issues. It's not beyond either Clinton or Obama to follow suit in November.

But what a Tar Heel–bred candidate understands, and the presidential contenders only dimly comprehend, is how broad the fissure between North Carolina's economic winners and losers has become. Clinton tends to decry the fate of free trade's victims one moment, and the next moment cheer on the new economy as though it's another item on her list of "solutions." The result can be an unrealistic emphasis on silver linings. "You know, North Carolina is a leader in innovation," Clinton told the folks at Wake Tech. "You've ranked third in biotech investment. And I've heard about what's happening in Kannapolis, where a new research park is opening on the site of a once-shuttered textile factory," called Pillowtex.

The Pillowtex story might sound like a happy example of globalization's magic payoff, but it's also a symbol of the widening economic divide in what people have taken to calling "the two North Carolinas." Pillowtex was originally Cannon Mills, one of the world's largest makers of products like sheets and towels (and a main source of Congressman Hayes's wealth). When the company filed for Chapter 11 in 2003, some 4,800 people lost their jobs. It was the largest layoff in state history, one that nobody, including the state agencies, was prepared for. Upward of half the displaced workers had no high school diplomas—products of a culture where, as Kissell says, "people left school at 16 or 17, knowing they could work in the mill and have a good life." They could not slide on over to Charlotte and get a solid job in banking, or up to Research Triangle Park for tech jobs. Plus, the homes their hard work had bought wouldn't sell for much more than a kitchen costs in one of those Yankee-infested developments around Raleigh or Charlotte. "They talk about retraining—but retraining for what?" asks Kissell. "That's what people want to know. They're stuck."

The laid-off Pillowtex workers' lives quickly became shaky. The company filed for bankruptcy at the end of July. By the first week of August, 43 percent said they were already behind in rent or mortgage payments. Ninety-three percent said they could no longer get health insurance. By the following March, just 500 were working again.

> 'They talk about retraining—but retraining for what? That's what people want to know. They're stuck.' —Congressional candidate Larry Kissell

And the good news that Clinton was now pointing to? The facility was bought by a single investor—the man who once owned the mill and sold it to Pillowtex, no less—who's converting it into a biotech research center expected to yield only up to 300 good jobs. But they won't be going to many of the locals who lost theirs. "A fair number of those jobs," says NC State University economist Michael Walden, "will be high-level research and not accessible to these folks." It's a common situation in the South, he says, and one rarely acknowledged by politicians. "Trade has helped some, hurt others. We've not been willing to have a serious conversation about this. The divide will only continue to grow if we don't find a way to take some of the savings for those who are benefiting to help that mill worker who, through no fault of his or her own, isn't in a position to benefit."

Back on Mill Hill, Larry Kissell is passing his card through the front door of a little prefab house, hollering over the yowl of a terrier at an apologetic young woman, "Nobody's gonna sneak up on you! Listen! I'm running again! In November!"

"I've been thinking about how few new houses have been built here in this area in the last few years," he says, trudging on. "It's really a rare thing." We approach the one new structure in evidence, where a former student of Kissell's, pregnant with her second child, answers the bell. "Hey, Lisa! I'm running again," he says, laughing. "Now, there's a perfect example of what's happened to our community," he tells me. "Her mom and dad both had between them, I'm sure, fifty, maybe sixty years in our mill. Shut down: two people out of a job. What are you gonna do? Her mother found a job, had two kids in college. Finally I think the dad, Roger, found a job, but I'm not sure it had benefits. I mean, the impact—it was just night and day. They had three

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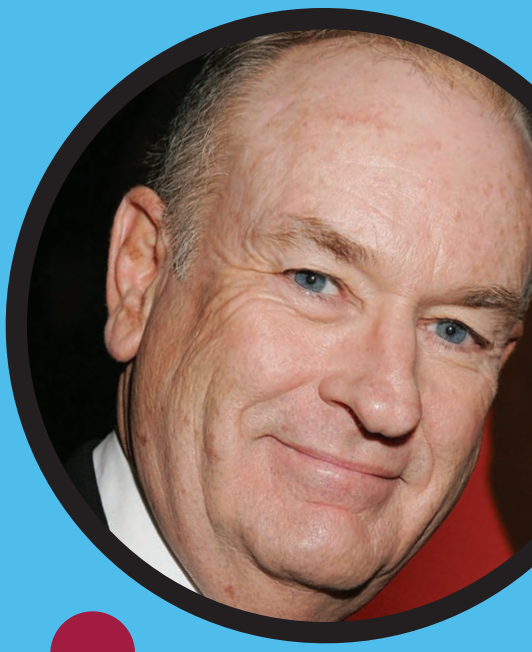

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daughters and a son, and it was just, Pow! What you going to do? Not everybody was able to respond the way they did."

After turning up nobody at the door of a ramshackle old white house, he comes back chuckling: "Guy had a sign up: 'Gone crazy, back soon.'" It seems symbolic somehow.

"Now I'm going to tell you how a teacher thinks," he tells me. "I just saw a pencil on that porch. I've got so many kids who come to class without pencils. It used to be you'd say, 'Go to the library and buy one for a quarter.' But now I can't do that.... You can't take what's happening here out of what's happening in our schools. We talk about improving education. Well, the best way we can do it is to improve the economy. You've got parents who are not able to be at home with their kids, to supervise their kids, to help their kids—and it's *not* by choice."

As if on cue, Kissell is interrupted by a teenage girl, Hispanic and probably 16, who comes bounding out the front door of the saddest-looking house on the street, a crumbling cinder-block structure with torn plastic flapping in the windows. "Mr. Kissell! Mr. Kissell!" she says, running toward him with a joyous smile. "Can I go back to school? I want to go back. I really miss it."

"Come find me. If you want to come back," he says, "we want you back."

"This year?" she asks.

"I think it's probably too late to come back this year, but next year. There's probably some ways you can make up some classes without having to go through the whole thing." "OK," she says, and skips back into the house.

Kissell shakes his head. "I knew her by sight. I did not know her by name. But I'll be in the guidance office on Monday and I'll tell them," he says. "Well. We'll get her back." And with a little extra giddyup in his stride, he marches up Mill Hill. ■

Starting Out Means a Steeper Climb

Young workers face lower wages and higher costs than their parents' generation.

by STEVEN GREENHOUSE

From 7 AM to 3 PM each day, John Arnold darts around Caterpillar's "materials-handling facility" in his forklift, maneuvering it with the deftness of a NASCAR driver. His job is to unload tractor parts from flatbed trucks and then deposit those parts—from engine gaskets to one-ton tractor buckets—in the huge store yard at the plant, just east of Peoria, Illinois. An earnest, deep-voiced giant of a man, Arnold likes his job, with one major reservation—twentysomethings like him can earn only three-fourths as much as the fiftysomethings who work alongside him.

Under the two-tier contract at Caterpillar, the most Arnold can ever earn is $14.90 an hour, or $31,000 a year—so little, he says, that some of his co-workers are living at home with their parents. "Some," he said, "are even on food stamps."

A 52-year-old who works alongside Arnold, doing exactly the same work, earns $19.03 an hour, or just under $40,000 a year, because employees who started before Arnold began in 1999 are on a higher wage scale. "I don't like it," Arnold said. "I wish I was at least able to get to the pay scale that the guys who are right next to me are making."

Scott Wilcoxon, a 26-year-old Navy veteran who not long ago served as an electrician on a nuclear submarine, operates five computer-controlled metal-cutting machines at Caterpillar. The maximum he can ever earn is $19.84 an hour, 21 percent below the maximum for the 50-year-olds working next to him. Wilcoxon says it's a struggle to support his wife and three children. "We can buy our food and our gas," he says. "But we can't go out to eat at a nice restaurant. We can't go to a movie. We can afford very few extras."

Caterpillar, based in Peoria, is an enduring symbol of America's industrial prowess, thanks to the success of its earth-moving machinery. At the end of World War II, the US Army left behind thousands of Caterpillar tractors to help Europe and Asia rebuild, a gesture that ultimately established Caterpillar worldwide. For decades the company reigned as the king of tractor production, and its factories in and around Peoria paid some of the best wages in the American heartland. In the late 1980s, Caterpillar's factory workers earned $16 an hour on average, equivalent to $28 an hour in 2007 dollars.

"My dad's worked at Caterpillar for thirty-seven years, and when I was a kid, he was making some good money," Arnold said. "I was hoping that I could eventually get to where my dad's at." His father, a millwright who repairs conveyor belts and other machinery, works in the same giant materials-handling facility and earns $25 an hour, nearly twice as much as his son. (Arnold's pay is lower than his father's not just because he is on the lower tier of a two-tier pay scale but also because he works in a less-skilled pay grade.)

John Arnold and Scott Wilcoxon are the type of workers on whom America's industrial success was built: diligent, dedicated and determined. But because their wages are lower than those of the previous generation, they are part of a reverse economic evolution unfolding at workplaces across the country: at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler; the Dana Corporation's more than two dozen auto parts plants; American Axle's two plants in upstate New York; ACF's railcar plant in Pennsylvania; and longshoremen's hiring halls along the East Coast.

Since manufacturing companies have pushed hardest for a

Steven Greenhouse has been the labor and workplace correspondent for the New York Times *since 1995. This article is excerpted from his new book,* The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker. *Copyright © 2008 by Steven Greenhouse. Reprinted with permission from the publisher Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House.* The Big Squeeze *examines the problems faced not only by young workers but also high-tech workers, blue-collar workers, freelancers, Wal-Mart workers and many other types of workers.*

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lower-wage tier for young workers, this phenomenon is most prevalent among the nation's 13.7 million factory workers.

Caterpillar began insisting on a lower-wage tier in the early 1990s. After losing more than $1 billion in the 1980s, in part because of lower prices offered by Komatsu and other foreign competitors, Caterpillar decided to take a hard line in bargaining with the United Auto Workers. Convinced that it needed to cut costs, the company demanded a dual wage scale that would pay new workers 60 percent less than experienced workers earned. The UAW resisted those demands and called a strike by 12,000 Caterpillar workers in late 1991.

After five months, Caterpillar emerged victorious and instituted a system that paid new workers 20 to 40 percent less than the other workers received. In Caterpillar's parlance, the lower pay scale is called "a competitive wage"—not so high that Caterpillar becomes uncompetitive against foreign tractor makers yet high enough to attract the workers it needs. The company seems confident that its pay strategy will assure its future as a thriving company.

But Wilcoxon's wife, Anessa, views the competitive wage from a different perspective. "My parents' house was bigger," said Anessa, whose father worked for Caterpillar for three decades. "We always had two cars when I was growing up. When we went out to eat—we had a family of five—we'd always go to a sit-down place. When we go out to eat now, it's McDonald's or Hardee's." The Wilcoxons rent a run-down three-bedroom house and have a second car only because Anessa's parents gave them their old GMC Sierra truck.

Caterpillar's CEO, Jim Owens, says the company's competitive wage strategy isn't destroying middle-class jobs so much as it's preserving jobs in America. If Caterpillar did not maintain its competitive wage rates, Owens says, his company would be closing plants in the United States or moving operations overseas, or perhaps both. But thanks to its competitive wages, Owens says, Caterpillar has been able to increase its Midwest workforce, expanding it by 5,000 in 2005. "What we've done is reposition ourselves to actually grow employment in our Midwestern plants," Owens said. "We finally have a labor cost that is viable."

Caterpillar's posture points to a rough future for millions of young Americans who may someday want factory jobs, jobs that workers without college degrees embraced in decades past to lift themselves into the middle class. Not long ago, the typical compensation package for unionized factory workers in the Midwest was $40 an hour, including benefits. But according to Daniel Luria, an economist at the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, that package is now around $25 an hour—$13–$18 an hour in wages plus $9 or so in benefits.

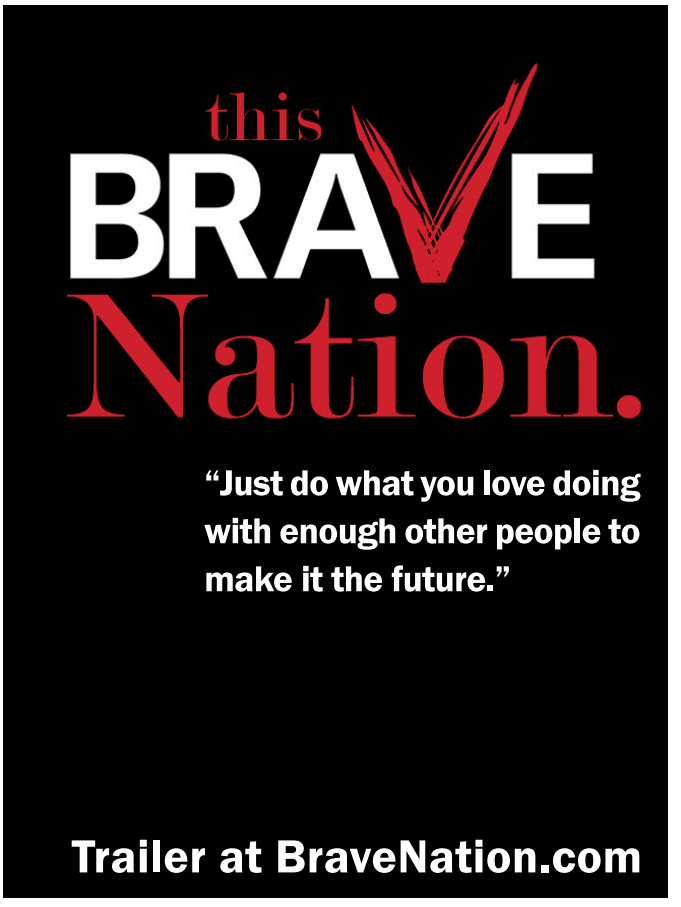
Among young workers at Caterpillar, the company's two-tier wage scale has engendered huge resentment. "Caterpillar," Wilcoxon said, "has monthly business meetings in the factory where managers talk about how the company is doing. They talk about their record sales and record profits, and we sit there, and they wonder why we're still bitter about the contract. I sometimes call those monthly meetings our monthly slap in the face. And each year the top executives' salaries are printed on the front page of the newspaper. They may not mean to, but it feels like they're rubbing it in our faces."

Recently, Caterpillar has piled up record earnings. Its net profits soared to $3.5 billion in 2006, up 74 percent from two years earlier. Those profits amount to $37,000 per employee, almost as much as Wilcoxon earns each year, convincing him and many other young workers that Caterpillar can easily raise wages without jeopardizing its competitiveness.

Shane Hillard, a 29-year-old who works at the same factory as Wilcoxon, said, "I don't understand how you're supposed to be able to buy a house and live the American dream when you work for one of the biggest companies in the United States and it's paying you just $12 an hour."

America has always stood for progress, for economic advancement and upward mobility. But for many of today's young Americans, progress seems uncertain because entry-level wages and benefits have languished while housing costs and college tuition have risen. As one expert put it, "The next generation is starting their economic race fifty yards behind the starting line."

Entry-level wages for college graduates and high school graduates fell from 2001 to 2005, after factoring in inflation, and median income slipped in families with at least one parent aged 25 to 34. Today's young workers face these wage problems because they are the first generation to come of age after the high-tech bubble burst, after offshoring jobs to India and elsewhere became popular, and after millions of factory jobs disappeared in a new wave of deindustrialization. "Young workers are on the cutting edge of experiencing all the changes in the economy," said Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute.



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Longer-term wage trends have been just as troubling. From 1979 to 2005, entry-level wages for male high school graduates without college degrees slid 19 percent (after inflation); for their female counterparts, they fell 9 percent. For young Americans with college degrees, entry-level wages did rise, although modestly and still far slower than wages for most older workers with college degrees. One study found that men who were in their 30s in 2004 had a median income 12 percent less, after factoring in inflation, than their fathers' generation did when they were in their 30s.

The changing job market is undercutting entry-level wages for those who do not go to college. "In the 1960s and 1970s, you saw high school graduates getting good jobs at Ford and AT&T, jobs that in inflation-adjusted terms were paying $20 or $25 in today's wages," said Sheldon Danziger, a professor of public policy at the University of Michigan. "Nowadays most kids with just high school degrees will work in service-sector jobs for $10 or less. That's where you see a big drop."

All told, a bit more than one in four of the 45 million workers under 35 does not have health insurance from any source, by far the highest rate of any age group. As for young workers with just high school degrees, two-thirds do not receive health coverage in their entry-level jobs, up from just over one-third in 1979.

Corporate America's increasing tightfistedness over pensions is also hitting young workers hard. The share of workers 25 to 34 participating in an employer-sponsored pension plan or 401(k) slid to 42 percent in 2005, down from 50 percent five years earlier. As for workers aged 35 to 64, 55 percent participate in employer-sponsored retirement plans. The picture is worst for young high school graduates; fewer than one in five participates in a retirement plan in an entry-level job.

Frustrated by his economic situation at Caterpillar, Scott Wilcoxon has enrolled in an online college program with Colorado Technical University. He was a star student in high school, studying two foreign languages and planning to major in physics in college. But he fell in love with Anessa, married at 18 and suddenly had a child to support. He joined the Navy instead of going to college because that enabled him to serve his country while his military pay supported his family. With the Navy now providing tuition assistance, he has decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in business, specializing in human resources. He used to dream of becoming a teacher, but he has since decided against it because "teachers don't exactly make enough to support a family of five." Now he hopes to work for a large corporation, training employees on mechanical operations. That way he can still teach, while earning more than a public school teacher.

Many nights after he returns home from Caterpillar at 11:30 PM, Wilcoxon studies until 1:30 AM. Sometimes he even hits the books during his half-hour lunch break at Caterpillar. "I've reached the top of the unskilled job market," Wilcoxon said. "This is the only thing that's going to allow us to get out of this upper-lower-class way we live." ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

Helen Adam's *Burning*

El Sobrante, Calif.

Ange Mlinko's review of *The Helen Adam Reader* ["A Nurse of Enchantment," April 14] mentions that Helen "decided to move to New York to adapt her apocalyptic play *San Francisco's Burning* for Broadway. It was a bust." Far, far from the truth: Helen was conspicuously hostile to Broadway. She had no intention of "adapting" it for anyone. She was pleased with the staged reading it received in San Francisco and hoped to have a more extensive production in New York.

The Judson Poets Theater, at Judson Memorial Church, one of the four major Off Off Broadway theaters, enthusiastically accepted it for production. Composer Al Carmines wrote sixty-three songs for it, Lee Guilliat designed a remarkable set, and a cast of thirty singing actors, directed by myself, created a sensationally successful play that filled the house every performance. Helen played the Witch (she claimed in life to actually be a witch) and when not onstage would stand in the back of the house and keep the performance going with spells. When we got a bad review from the *Village Voice*, Helen put a curse on the critic and mailed him an ace of spades. He broke a leg, came back and apologized with a great new review. Helen was happy!

Larry Kornfeld

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Helen Adam's previous collections are not *all* "out of print for decades." *Ghosts and Grinning Shadows*, her collection of chilling ghost stories, published by Hanging Loose Press in 1979, is still in print. The same is true of *San Francisco's Burning*, which we brought out in a new complete edition in 1985, with the original score by Al Carmines and others and illustrations by Jess. Hanging Loose's policy is never to let its titles go out of print. Both can be found at http://hangingloosepress.com.

Robert Hershon, Dick Lourie
Mark Pawlak, *editor/publishers*

Mlinko Replies

Croton on Hudson, N.Y.

The Judson Church production of *San Francisco's Burning* did indeed make Helen Adam happy, and it resulted in her growing cult status. But according to Kristin Prevallet, Adam's ultimate goal was a Broadway production and financial security. Larry Kornfeld states that "Helen was conspicuously hostile to Broadway." Prevallet, however, maintains that "Adam, then fifty-four years old, was working as a waitress at a pizza parlor. Given the success of *San Francisco's Burning*, the sisters decided they should move to New York City to seek fame and fortune on Broadway." The move was supposed to be temporary—they left with only a few suitcases and put most of their possessions in storage—but "their big-city dreams were never realized, and after two years in New York they were too broke to return to San Francisco." Judging from a 1986 letter to Robert Duncan, Adam seems to have viewed this fate as a punishment for her worldly ambition, which was at odds with her poetic muse. Certainly, the whole history of *San Francisco's Burning* is vexed, but that only adds to its mystique.

Ange Mlinko

Correction

In Alexander Cockburn's April 28 "Beat the Devil" column, the Seawolf submarine is nuclear powered, not nuclear armed.

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Books & the Arts.

Lost Causes Not Yet Found

by KEVIN M. KRUSE

In August 1967 the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered what would be his last presidential address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Despite the assembled activists' many accomplishments in their struggle for racial justice, the civil rights leader reminded them that there was still much work to be done in the struggle for economic justice. Forty million poor people lived in America, King told them, and it was their responsibility as Christians and citizens not simply to take care of the poor but to confront the economic system that allowed them to be poor. "We've got to begin to ask questions about the whole society," the minister asserted. "We are called upon to help the discouraged beggars in life's marketplace. But one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

Hoping to rouse the country to action against this evil—an evil, in his eyes, that was more deeply entrenched than racism—King urged his listeners to reject their own sense of satisfaction and instead to be filled with what he called a "divine dissatisfaction." "Let us be dissatisfied," he said, "until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort from the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice. Let us be dissatisfied until those who live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security. Let us be dissatisfied until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history and every family will live in a decent, sanitary home." This was a bold agenda, one to which King devoted the last years of his life. Soon after the address, he organized the Poor People's Campaign with plans to bring together an interracial coalition for a massive protest in the nation's capital. Much of his remaining time he devoted to supporting union causes across the country, including the sanitation workers' strike that would bring him to Memphis, and his murder, the following spring.

This final address to the civil rights organization King led—a call to arms titled "Where Do We Go From Here?"—should occupy a central place in his legacy. Instead, Americans have chosen to remember the civil rights leader more for the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech he delivered four years earlier, during the March on Washington. In the popular imagination, that address and its occasion have been enshrined as the high-water mark of the integrationist crusade. In truth, both were more complicated. At a fundamental level, the historic proceedings of that day in August 1963 embodied a struggle not simply for racial justice but for economic justice as well. The event's formal title, after all, was the March on Washington for *Jobs* and Freedom. Its demands included civil rights legislation but also fair hiring practices, an increase in the minimum wage and a federal public-works program to create new

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Pauli Murray, 1931

Defying Dixie
The Radical Roots of Civil Rights.
By Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore.
Norton. 642 pp. $39.95.

Kevin M. Kruse, associate professor of history at Princeton University, is the author of White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism.

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jobs. As King reminded the massive crowd gathered on the Mall, even 100 years after emancipation "the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity."

Despite the centrality of economic concerns in the march—and, indeed, in the movement that inspired it—Americans have chosen to remember only its mandate for racial integration. To be sure, the most ritualistically quoted line of the day remains King's dream of a nation in which his children would be judged not "by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." While that call for a colorblind society was certainly controversial at the time, virtually all Americans lay claim to his vision today. Liberals see themselves as heirs of the civil rights movement as they remain vigilant against the many manifestations of racism. Conservatives, meanwhile, invoke those selfsame words as an argument against race-conscious efforts by public and private institutions to counteract the legacies of slavery and segregation. (Never mind the fact that such an interpretation is wholly at odds with the enthusiastic support that King and other civil rights leaders gave to affirmative action in education and employment.)

Ultimately, this understanding of the civil rights movement as a struggle against racism alone has been so widely accepted because it flatters our sense of ourselves. It assures us in soothing tones that all the movement's concerns have been addressed, all the problems solved, all the wrongs righted. The American landscape is no longer scarred by the physical markers of racial segregation, such as separate drinking fountains or crudely divided public spaces. The most obvious and egregious examples of racial subjugation have been likewise written out of our public laws and our national consciousness. In the final reckoning, the civil rights movement has been simplified in American memory to little more than a morality tale. The martyrs of the movement died for the nation's original sin of racism; as a result, our sin has been washed away.

In truth, the civil rights struggle was, from its creation, a much more radical proposition. As historians like Michael Honey, Thomas Jackson and Robert Rodgers Korstad have illuminated in their excellent work, much in the world of civil rights activism posed a direct challenge to the traditional structures and systems of American capitalism. At its core, the movement aimed not simply to remove the trappings of racial segregation and discrimination but also to eliminate the economic injustices that had continued to control the lives of African-Americans in the aftermath of slavery. In the rural South, a sharecropping system held poor blacks in an impoverished state of debt peonage; meanwhile, in urban areas they were trapped in an industrial labor regime that depended on both the degradation of black workers and the devaluing of their wages. From an early date, the visionaries of the nascent civil rights movement recognized that the political repression and economic oppression of African-Americans were intricately intertwined, especially in the Jim Crow South. One evil could not be uprooted without eradicating the other.

> Gilmore's reclamation project is also an attempt to chronicle the "long civil rights movement."

When the struggle for civil rights entered popular consciousness in the mid-1950s, however, the fundamental importance of economic issues to the movement was intentionally obscured. The climate of the cold war doomed to a political death any domestic issue associated with Communism, no matter how tenuously, and civil rights stood as just such an issue tainted by its radical relations. In its official pronouncements, the Communist Party had long called for equal rights for racial minorities; so, in a perverse reversal, many anti-Communists asserted that anyone who supported civil rights therefore had to be a Communist. Recognizing that their basic stand against racism was already deemed suspect in the eyes of many officials, civil rights activists tended to downplay other causes that would assuredly be denounced as Communist in inspiration, such as union rights and guarantees of fair employment.

Moreover, leaders of the movement went to great lengths to distance themselves from fellow activists with links to Communist or socialist organizations, however loose or outdated those connections might have been. Walter White and Roy Wilkins, for instance, helped drive suspected Communists from the ranks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Even King's SCLC eventually bowed to pressure from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and publicly distanced itself from key allies with suspect pasts, including Stanley Levison, one of the men responsible for its very creation. Disowning both a radical economic agenda and the activists who helped advance it, leaders of the movement made what they considered to be a tactical concession necessitated by the cold war climate. But in so doing, they helped popularize a false impression of the civil rights struggle as one focused solely on issues of race.

In *Defying Dixie*, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore seeks to reclaim the radical origins of the modern civil rights struggle. By locating its roots in the wake of World War I, Gilmore joins a growing group of scholars in chronicling what historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called the "long civil rights movement." In this view, the interwar decades do not stand as a mere prelude to the more prominent struggle for black equality in the 1950s and '60s but instead represent a crucial aspect of a more complex campaign that had as its goal a fundamental reordering of American society. Previous scholars of the interwar era, such as John Egerton and Patricia Sullivan, have skillfully demonstrated the ways liberal and radical Southerners waged an improbable struggle on behalf of civil liberties, civil rights and labor rights in a region notorious for its unending hostility to all three. Gilmore builds on their fine work, demonstrating the ways struggles for political and economic justice were inextricably intertwined from the earliest days of the civil rights movement. The movement's later demand for "jobs and freedom" was, in the end, nothing new.

While Gilmore retraces much of the same terrain as earlier scholars, she does so from a strikingly fresh perspective. Instead of taking the traditional path and examining the South in isolation, she situates the region in a national and international framework. Gilmore is adept at drawing character studies and uses this talent to follow the lives of several Southerners, white and black, who were forced to flee their native region. Some took refuge in the North, forming informal "governments in exile," issuing challenges to their homeland while remaining safely outside its reach. Others moved nimbly through the world of international radicalism, journeying to places seemingly far removed from the American South, such as the Soviet Union and South Africa. Gilmore follows them across time and place, tracking their paths not simply in her narrative but in her research. Many of the international archives she mines for material have been previously overlooked, such as a rich collection in Moscow packed with documents detailing Communist Party operations in the South. In the end, Gilmore

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produces a kaleidoscopic picture: colorful scenes slide into place for a brief, close inspection, only to be swept aside for a new scene viewed from a new angle. While at times it's difficult to draw connections between these segments and trace a coherent narrative, the individual vignettes are certainly compelling on their own.

One of the first figures Gilmore explores in depth is Lovett Fort-Whiteman. A native Texan and a Tuskegee graduate, he moved easily across the terrain of radical politics. After witnessing the Mexican Revolution firsthand in the Yucatán and then agitating for socialist causes in Harlem, Fort-Whiteman became the first African-American member of the Communist Party. In short order, party officials summoned him to Moscow to teach him about the true nature of the struggle in the American South. There, before an audience that included Joseph Stalin and Ho Chi Minh, he tried to convince them that an interracial coalition of Southern workers would be impossible to achieve. He was overruled by the party orthodoxy and, for a time, he accepted their vision over what he had seen in the South with his own eyes. Indeed, during his stay, Fort-Whiteman came to embrace the Soviet Union as a paradise, an exciting young nation where the only "Negro problem" was the almost embarrassing tendency of Russians to bend over backward in testament to their racial egalitarianism. The transplanted Texan warmly embraced his new country's culture with a convert's zeal. When he returned to the United States, he wore his new allegiances quite literally on his sleeve, modeling a Russian peasant blouse and knee-high felt boots, his head completely shaved save for a small mustache. But he would not linger long in America and soon returned, in his words, "home to Moscow." Tragically, as Gilmore relates, his new home would prove to be as cruel as the old. In the end, the true believer was swept up in the Stalinist purges and sent to a Siberian labor camp. Badly beaten and starved by his guards, he died a broken man in the winter of 1939.

Gilmore charts the currents of international radicalism in the opposite direction as well. In so doing, she shows that the misplaced faith Fort-Whiteman had in the Soviet Union was mirrored by the blind optimism of Communist organizers who saw his native South as fertile ground for interracial unionism. In a careful study of the 1929 textile mill workers' strike in Gastonia, North Carolina, Gilmore illuminates the ways Communists seized upon any shred of evidence to support their assumptions about the prospects for bringing together workers of all races in revolution. Otto Hall, an African-American Communist who had followed Fort-Whiteman to Moscow, returned to America to carry out the improbable task of recruiting workers in the mills into an integrated union. When he was saved from certain death by the intervention of white strikers, party propagandists trumpeted the tale as "a parable of Communist possibility."

In fact, the region remained fiercely resistant to interracial organizing, as seen in the trials that came in the strike's wake. Ella May Wiggins, a young white mother of five who was active in the cause, had been shot point-blank in the chest. The gunmen had doggedly pursued Wiggins and other strikers in a high-speed chase, causing their pickup to crash and then firing a volley of shots to finish them off. At the trial, defense attorneys argued that their clients should be set free "because the slain woman believed in communism." After half an hour of deliberations, the jury did precisely that. Meanwhile, when strikers were brought to court for a separate shooting, the prosecutor made it clear that they were really on trial for their political beliefs. Union organizers, he said, were "fiends incarnate, stripped of their hoofs and horns, bearing guns instead of pitchforks…sweeping like a cyclone and tornado to sink damnable fangs into the heart and lifeblood of my community." In this instance, the jury took less than an hour to convict. Even though the prosecution had only levied charges of murder in the second degree, the jurors stunned the judge by handing down even harsher verdicts of murder in the first degree.

As the disillusionment over such incidents spread, Communists in the South and the Soviet Union abandoned idealistic rhetoric and confronted the harsh truths of each region. With the allure of foreign allies fading, Southern radicals looked to find new friends closer to home. Communists and liberal New Dealers, despite their disagreements about capitalism, soon discovered they had common cause in the Depression. In time, they formed what Gilmore characterizes as a "southern Popular Front" to fight their shared enemies—reactionary Southern conservatives at home and fascists abroad. New Deal liberals, the radicals discovered, were interested in many of the same problems as Communists, although they came to rather different conclusions. Communists had seen the South as the least industrialized and least unionized region of the country, and thus the most fertile ground for proletarian revolution; New Dealers agreed that the region represented "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem" but held that their economic reforms could strengthen capitalism rather than bring about its end. In both analyses, Southern blacks represented the core of the problem and the best chance for a solution. If they could be made into Communists, the Soviet Union believed, Southern blacks could bring about the revolution, first across their region and then throughout the United States; if they were not converted, then black sharecroppers and wage laborers would essentially remain a reserve proletariat, one whose low wages would preserve the entrenched power of industrialists and planters. New Dealers, meanwhile, worried that the substandard wages of black workers depressed the wages of all Southerners and thus reduced consumer spending. If their economic lot could be improved, wages would rise across the board and the backward economy of the South could be made more efficient and effective. Depending on one's perspective and politics, black Southerners could either destroy capitalism or save it.

The status of black Southerners held serious consequences not just for the future of capitalism but for the future of democracy as well. In a brief but powerful passage, Gilmore

Fugues and Flowers

Always dawn, eve. Embanked fog,
settled in, is loathed to lift. M., I
see and raise your AKG C414,
wager singing—not singed—star
even as a faint, failing filament
lacerates Perecesque night. For whom-
ever purse the kitty mounts, offered
up to this birth control pill-
purchased spread. O Pamela, post-
Ophelia, Malachi nee Mark—
a mother is a fish. My darlings,
who is that running out of time,
barn, Ryder? Some jazz was playing—
par but for the vase of ashes,
loathed, loathing these leave-takings…
Goodnight Ladies, sweet prince, yes,
t'is the night before the Media Room
put pen to paper as background
scratchy turntablism. Tombstones radio
back the ground. Shifting sand dunes
mount Lake—not Lady—M.
Background cackle—Molly? Yes?
yesyesyesyesyesyes—out,
out of jukebox whack.

TYRONE WILLIAMS

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reminds her readers how the disenfranchisement of Southern blacks had distorted national politics. With peculiar institutions like the poll tax denying the vote to poor blacks (and poor whites as well), Southern Congressmen were routinely elected by incredibly small constituencies. In the early 1940s, in four poll tax states, a total of 264,429 votes managed to put thirty-two Congressmen into office; in Rhode Island, meanwhile, an even larger total of 314,023 votes would elect just two Congressmen. White Southern conservatives were thus represented in Congress in wildly disproportionate measures. Due to the severely restricted electorates in their districts and the one-party rule of the region, these Southern Democrats had high rates of incumbency. And given the seniority rules of Washington, their long tenures let them dominate the Congressional leadership. Representative Howard Smith of Virginia, a notorious white supremacist and avowed enemy of organized labor, wielded extraordinary power in the Capitol, and yet he had won the votes of just 5 percent of all adults in his district. Taking stock of political realities, liberals and radicals came to recognize the importance of restoring the franchise to Southern blacks. It would provide a broader base of electoral support for the politics of the left and, at the same time, strip the political cover away from their fiercest Congressional enemies on the right. Once again, black Southerners emerged as a crucial, mutual focus of their energies.

Despite the common ground that liberals and radicals discovered during the brief life of the Southern Popular Front, fault lines still ran between them. Gilmore uses portraits of two prominent North Carolinians, Frank Porter Graham and Pauli Murray, to help illustrate the divide. President of the University of North Carolina, Graham emerged in the Depression as a formidable force for liberal causes, both on and off campus. His efforts stood in sharp relief to the segregationist politics of the state and, moreover, to the equivocation of white moderates, especially prominent figures on his faculty like the noted sociologist Howard Odum. In much of the writing on the era's race relations, both at the time and since, moderates like Odum have been singled out for recognition as the essential actors, without whom nothing could be done. "Since they saw themselves as more tolerant than other white Southerners, they acted as hydraulic engineers at Jim Crow's watershed," Gilmore relates. "Let a little pressure off the Negro, they would shout to southern whites. Be patient, they would whisper to southern blacks; remember, we are all that stands between you and an ocean of hate." In truth, such white moderates did little more than file down the sharper edges of white supremacy. They sought to make race relations "work" within the status quo, never challenging its norms or its essential assumptions.

Graham, in contrast, confronted the Jim Crow system directly. Present at the creation of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW), one of the most progressive regional organizations in the late 1930s, he challenged his fellow Southerners to address the political and economic injustices facing African-Americans in the South. "In this day when democracy and freedom are in retreat everywhere in the face of totalitarian powers and their regimentation of youth and persecution of minorities, let us raise the flag of freedom and democracy where it counts most," Graham urged his audience. Echoing the rhetoric of radicals and liberals alike, he pointedly argued that "the black man is the primary test of American democracy and Christianity." The university president initially declined the SCHW chairmanship when it was offered to him, but once Southern segregationists howled over his remarks, he changed course. His rationale for the reversal implied he had dug in his heels simply out of spite: "I propose not to run because some groups shout Communist or Negrophile."

However, if Graham represented the courage found in a handful of white Southern liberals, he also demonstrated the limits of their liberalism. In his case, the boundaries became clear shortly after the SCHW controversy, when UNC was confronted with an application for graduate studies from Pauli Murray. A fascinating figure, Murray was a black cross-dressing lesbian feminist from nearby Durham, one whose life would run the gamut of radical and liberal politics before leading to her improbable ordination as an Episcopal priest. For a Southern white liberal like Frank Graham, Murray was first and foremost a reminder of the limits of his own politics. He was personally inclined to support her cause, but as a university official he was bound by the segregation statutes of the state and had no choice but to deny her application. Stubbornly persistent, Murray peppered him with appeals, both public and private. Graham would have doubtlessly been stung by how closely her complaints mirrored his own. "How much longer," she asked, "is the South going to withhold elementary human rights from its black citizens? How can Negroes, the economic backbone of the South for centuries, defend our institutions against the threats of Fascism and barbarism if we too are treated the same as the Jews of Germany?"

For civil rights pioneers like Pauli Murray, a radical past proved to be an unshakable burden.

While she would never gain admission to UNC's graduate program, Murray emerged as a pioneer in civil rights activism. In 1942, for instance, while a law student at Howard University, she took part in a planning conference to create a permanent activist organization out of the original March on Washington Movement. A creation of black socialist and labor leader A. Philip Randolph, the MOWM had secured a federal ban on racial discrimination in defense industries the previous year. Seeking to build on that momentum, Murray produced an incredibly forward-looking blueprint for action. In it, she outlined a civil rights agenda that was, in its broad strategy and specific tactics, almost identical to the one that would later be employed by activists in the 1950s and '60s. The movement would need "disciplined and trained leaders, students and young people" who "should use a carefully planned non-violent technique of refusal to accept such discriminations." Civil rights workers, she said, needed to be prepared to accept arrests and to go to jail in order to challenge segregation statutes in the courts of law, as well as the court of public opinion. Local boycotts and picketing campaigns would provide economic pressure against their opponents and add a sense of urgency to their demonstrations. "Negroes will consciously dramatize the problem before the whole nation," MOWM organizers concluded, "by a mass demonstration of disobedience to jim crow laws and patterns." Impressive though she was as a strategist, Murray was not content to sit idly on the sidelines. In 1940 she boldly challenged the customs of bus segregation deep inside Virginia; three years later, she began leading Howard students in a sit-in movement that demanded desegregation of lunch counters and cafeterias in Washington, DC.

Even though Murray's wartime activism failed to spark a broad-based movement for civil rights at the time, she ultimately felt that her call for action had been answered. "In not a single one of these little campaigns was I victorious," she recalled later. "In each case, I personally failed, but I have lived to see the

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thesis upon which I was operating vindicated.… I've lived to see my lost causes found." While such reflection provides an uplifting ending to Gilmore's book, it is essentially unproven by her own evidence. Gilmore sees the collected activism of these assorted Communists, socialists, union organizers and New Deal liberals as the "radical roots" of the postwar civil rights movement, yet she does little to demonstrate the concrete links between the two generations of activists. To be sure, their causes were often the same; even their strategies and tactics, as seen in Pauli Murray's case, could be strikingly similar. But the causal relationship between the two eras is never proved. The postwar generation of activists certainly knew about their predecessors, in some fashion or another, but the vital question of precisely how, and to what degree, those later activists drew on the earlier example for general inspiration or specific plans remains unanswered. Ultimately, Gilmore's close focus on the prophetic vision of the heroes she chronicles leaves little room for such an examination of the practical mechanisms of political and social change.

While such connections to the later civil rights movement are not pursued, the lives at the center of Gilmore's story are followed dutifully to their often tragic ends. For some, like Lovett Fort-Whiteman, dead of starvation in a Siberian labor camp, or the Gastonia strikers, gunned down in the streets and then abandoned in the courts, the end came in literal death. For others, death was merely political. Frank Porter Graham made his way to the Senate, selected to serve the remaining term of a legislator who died in office; however, he found his 1950 quest for a full term shattered by an ugly redbaiting campaign, orchestrated by a young Jesse Helms, that tarred him as "Frank the Front." Pauli Murray, for her part, saw a potential appointment as general counsel for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—a dream job, in her eyes—cruelly derailed when it was revealed that she had briefly been a member of a Communist splinter group three decades earlier.

Radical pasts, for these men and women, proved to be unshakable burdens. Yet, in a bitter irony, the most radical causes they championed in their quest for economic justice have been almost effortlessly cast away. Four decades after Martin Luther King bemoaned the existence of 40 million Americans living in poverty, the number of poor Americans has barely diminished. As Gilmore's study of the radical past of the civil rights movement reminds us, the struggle is not yet over, the lost causes not yet found. In the end, there is still much about which we should be dissatisfied. ■

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After the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., thousands marched in Memphis to honor his legacy.

Hearts and Minds

by THOMAS J. SUGRUE

"So let us say that on this day of all days, each of us carries with us the task of changing our hearts and minds," proclaimed Barack Obama in January from the pulpit at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, in a speech marking the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Obama's high-minded words echo those of Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, whose 1944 book *An American Dilemma* still defines the basic dynamics of racial politics in America. In a lengthy italicized passage in his introduction, Myrdal provided the essence of his argument for readers who did not want to slog through its 1,483 data-laden pages: "*The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on.*" For its unflinching accounts of patterns of segregation, the rhetoric and practice of Jim Crow, and pervasive racial violence, Myrdal's book is indispensable. But the book's longest-lived contribution was its argument—one that resonated with American religious and therapeutic culture—that racial inequality was fundamentally a moral and psychological problem that would be resolved only when Americans' hearts and minds were untainted by prejudice.

Myrdal had many detractors, most of them on the left. Marxist historian Herbert Aptheker criticized him for downplaying

Thomas J. Sugrue, Kahn Professor of History and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author of Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North, *to be published by Random House this fall.*

Race Relations
A Critique.
By Stephen Steinberg.
Stanford. 194 pp. $17.95.

Come on People
On the Path From Victims to Victors.
By Bill Cosby and Alvin F. Poussaint.
Thomas Nelson. 265 pp. $25.99.

Sellout
The Politics of Racial Betrayal.
By Randall Kennedy.
Pantheon. 228 pp. $22.

The Race Card
How Bluffing About Bias Makes Race Relations Worse.
By Richard Thompson Ford.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 388 pp. $26.

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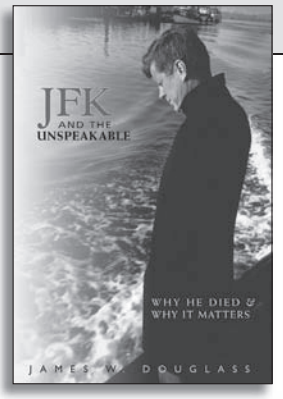
the long history of black resistance to inequality. Oliver Cromwell Cox, the West Indian–born sociologist whose brilliant but mostly neglected book *Caste, Class, and Race* was published just a few years after *An American Dilemma*, took Myrdal to task for downplaying the connection between race and economic exploitation. Cox singled out Myrdal's "mystical" belief that changing individual attitudes would end the "exploitation" at the heart of racial inequality. "In the end," wrote Cox, "the social system is exculpated." Myrdal's critics grew more numerous in the 1960s. In their 1968 manifesto *Black Power*, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton offered their own challenge to individualistic understandings of race relations and coined the term "institutional racism" to account for the ways that racial inequality was not solely or even primarily a matter of beliefs or attitudes. They pinpointed "conditions of poverty and discrimination" rooted in unequal relationships of power and privilege, like the healthcare system that failed urban blacks and that "destroyed and maimed" lives every bit as effectively as the actions of the most brutal individual racists.

Aptheker, Cox, Carmichael and Hamilton were swimming against strong political and cultural currents. Most Americans now, as then—black and white, leftist, liberal or conservative—take for granted that racial inequality is predominantly a problem of hearts and minds, of bad attitudes, deeply felt prejudices, irrational thinking, intolerance and immorality. They aren't wholly wrong. Forty years after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., overt racism (Klan marches, Denny's restaurants rebuffing black customers and noose-laden trees in Jena, Louisiana) still plagues America. But hooded Klansmen, bigoted waitresses and perverted youth who romanticize lynching (of which there are still all too many) are not the prime causes of racial inequality in America today. Nor are the many whites who still trade in vile stereotypes of blacks.

The obsession with individual culpability has created an impasse in our thinking about race, right down to the widely used misnomers "postracial" and "post–civil rights era." Explaining racial inequality in America—especially the most enduring form of it, that between blacks and whites—flummoxes even those most devoted to analyzing and eradicating it. How do we make sense out of a country where racial inequality is deeply entrenched but where racism is seldom overt? How can we square evidence of racial progress with the grim reality of persistent ra-



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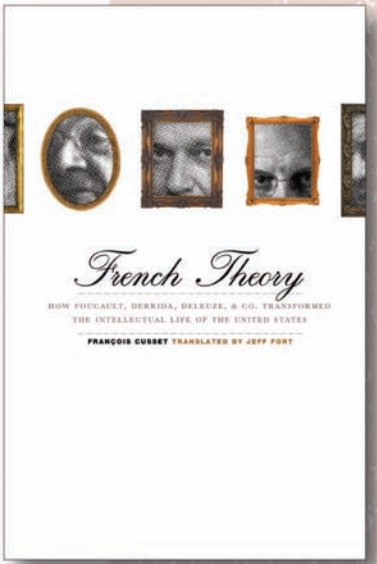
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cialized poverty, unemployment, health and wealth gaps and educational disparities?

There are two prevailing answers to these questions. Racial optimists emphasize the extraordinary progress blacks have made in the United States over the last half-century. In their view, the civil rights legislation of the 1960s—and the related shift in white attitudes—removed the formal legal obstacles to black advancement. As a result of the society-wide delegitimation of racism, most whites are now truly colorblind. The market rewards blacks and whites alike on their merit. Racial separation is the result of the inexorable expression of freedom of choice. Any remaining inequality is the result of blacks' cultural pathologies and moral deficiencies, not racism. Only African-Americans themselves can solve their problems, by dealing with the dysfunctional behaviors and self-defeating attitudes that keep them down.

Racial pessimists, by contrast, argue that racism is pervasive but well hidden. Peel away whites' colorblind rhetoric and beneath it you will find deep-rooted, perhaps subconscious, evidence of racial hatred. When white public officials criticize blacks (think Bill Clinton and Sister Souljah or the recent fracas between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama about Martin Luther King Jr., Lyndon Johnson and civil rights legislation), they face charges of racism. And the horrible and still all-too-frequent acts of racist violence are regularly interpreted as the tip of an iceberg of white hatred. Racially tinged insults or crimes become the moral equivalent of lynchings. Racial justice, in this view, requires constant vigilance against veiled and hooded racism. And it requires an ongoing struggle for hearts and minds—exhortation and education to reveal and overcome hidden biases. Two Harvard psychologists, Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald, have even gone so far as to devise a cognitive test that correlates rapid flashes of black and white faces and words with positive or negative connotations to uncover "implicit bias" (what a skeptical critic calls measuring "prejudice in milliseconds"). They have recast racism as a problem in the amygdala of the American.

Banaji and Greenwald's work fits within a centurylong tradition of social science research that, as Stephen Steinberg shows in *Race Relations: A Critique*, has obscured more about racial inequality than it has revealed. Steinberg is a genealogist of mainstream racial sociology—tracing its troubled heritage from Booker T. Washington through the celebrated Chicago School sociologists of the early and mid-twentieth century through Nathan Glazer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and, most recently, William Julius Wilson. Specialists won't be wholly satisfied with Steinberg's rather selective intellectual history. Steinberg is, for example, much better at interrogating the work of white sociologists like the University of Chicago's Robert Park than he is in fleshing out the complexities of the many black social scientists—including Cox, E. Franklin Frazier and Charles Johnson—who came out of the Chicago School. But *Race Relations* is a critical essay—not a comprehensive history. Steinberg is relentlessly polemical, often witty and sometimes brilliant in his debunking of the conventional wisdom. Like all iconoclasts, he overstates his case. But for all of his rhetorical excess, his argument that the mainstream of twentieth-century social science downplayed racial oppression and exploitation for individualistic understandings of race relations is powerful and convincing, and it needs to be heard as he shouts it from the rooftops.

A key villain in Steinberg's story is Robert Park, a white journalist who worked closely with the Tuskegee Institute's Booker T. Washington (ghostwriting at least some of Washington's famed *The Story of the Negro*, published in 1909) before joining the nation's most illustrious sociology department at the University of Chicago in 1914. Park's fault, according to Steinberg, was his faith in the inevitability of racial progress, his condescension toward black research subjects and his inability to see the connections between black oppression, American imperialism and white economic power. Chicago School sociology, argues Steinberg, bequeathed Myrdal and his successors a paradigm of "race relations" that emphasized attitudes and beliefs and downplayed white power and privilege along with the economic and political institutions that created and reinforced them.

Steinberg's discussion of the period from the 1940s through the '60s is far sketchier and ultimately less compelling than his analysis of Park and Myrdal. He misses two crucial developments in the postwar years that ensured the hegemony of the "race relations" model. The first was the cold war. Anti-Communism shunted critics like Cox to the margins and heightened the clout of Myrdal's popularizers, who celebrated the "American creed" of opportunity and liberty. Those who demonstrated that America had been built on the backs of unfree labor and who argued for the fundamental interconnection between racial and economic inequality were ridiculed as reds. The sec-

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ond was the triumph of social psychology, a field that located the roots of racial inequality in the "authoritarian personality" or in deformed familial relations—and promoted therapeutic solutions that targeted both pathological white racists and their psychically "damaged" black victims.

Steinberg's bête noire—the only black sociologist whose work comes in for detailed analysis—is William Julius Wilson, who succeeded Park at the University of Chicago before taking his current post at Harvard. Wilson became an academic celebrity with the publication of his controversial 1978 book *The Declining Significance of Race*. He emerged as a leading skeptic of affirmative action, arguing instead for universal programs that would address economic insecurity. (Steinberg quotes a cheeky critic who suggests that the book would have slipped into obscurity had it been titled *The Increasing Significance of Class*.) Wilson's next influential book, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), resuscitated the controversial 1965 Moynihan Report, which explained marital breakdown as a root cause of African-American poverty. Wilson's critics accused him of legitimating conservative arguments that welfare rewarded unwed motherhood and undermined "family values."

Steinberg comes close to depicting Wilson as a turncoat whose writing gave succor to conservative critics of civil rights. But the lack of nuance in his reading of Wilson weakens Steinberg's overall argument. Wilson's books are something like the Bible, open to multiple, contradictory readings. Right-wing pundits picked up on his bleak depiction of the black family and crusaded against the "perverse incentives of welfare." Neoliberals, most notably Bill Clinton, used Wilson's work to distance themselves from affirmative action. But Steinberg ignores two of Wilson's most important contributions—his emphasis on deindustrialization and its devastating consequences for inner-city residents and, in his 1996 book, *When Work Disappears*, his discussion of the ways that employers use race as a "signal" of undesirable characteristics, making sweeping generalizations about the unreliability of black workers. That book might have been subtitled *The Continuing Significance of Race*. Neither argument can be dismissed as cavalierly as Steinberg does.

But if Wilson is too much Steinberg's straw man, Steinberg's larger argument—that racial inequality is ultimately a matter of oppression and exploitation, not personal prejudice and bigotry—stands. The story of inequality is one of the maldistribution of power and resources. Racial inequality has persisted in American life not just because whites harbor bad thoughts about blacks but because the advantages that redound to whites through racial segregation, especially in housing and education, have yet to be dismantled. But structural explanations of racial inequality have never fared well in a culture that attributes success to individual merit and pluck. White Americans who live in privileged suburbs pride themselves on their colorblindness but resist efforts to construct affordable housing lest it interfere with property values. They rebel against the misuse of their tax dollars to support the indolent and efforts to shore up failing urban schools. Structural explanations are taboo because they puncture our treasured myths of upward mobility and self-reinvention. Anyone can make it if they try hard enough, if they break free from the chains of dependency, if they get up in the morning and say, "Yes, I can!"

Bill Cosby and Alvin Poussaint's *Come on People*, combining pop psychology and individualist bromides, carries racial individualism to its logical and absurd conclusion. "How many speakers speak out every day about racism, whether it's systemic or whatever?" writes Cosby. "Even if there is truth to what they say, they sedate themselves with it." *Come on People* is a mishmash of romanticism ("In 1950, we still feared our parents and respected them"), libertarianism ("Governments don't care. People care, and no people care like parents do") and hoary parental advice ("Turn off the TV," "Reinforce Standard English," "Respect Our Elders"). The book is ostensibly targeted toward poor and working-class blacks, but Cosby and Poussaint's real audience is middle-class blacks, those cardigan-wearing suburbanites who have "made it" and who can nod along righteously as they distance themselves from their prodigal drug-dealing sons and nephews and grandchildren who live their lives buying iced-out bling, "wallowing in victimhood" and blaming whites and "the system" rather than shaping up and imitating their betters. *Come on People* is *The Power of Positive Thinking* for the wayward Negro. We shall overcome—by ourselves, by our own hard work and gumption, thank you very much.

Cosby and Poussaint's notion that black poverty and violence are the result of self-defeating behavior is simplistic, if widely held among blacks and whites. And their solution—that black people need to fix it themselves by fixing themselves—is disastrously shortsighted. We expect the poor to

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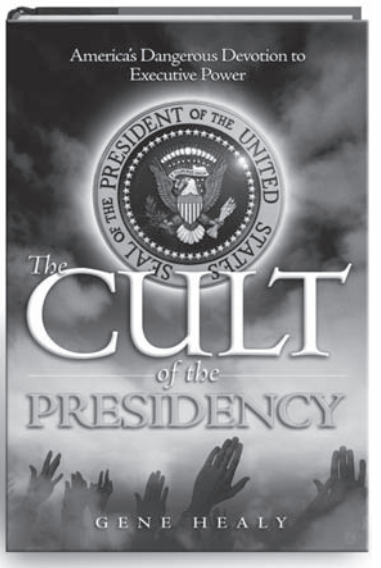

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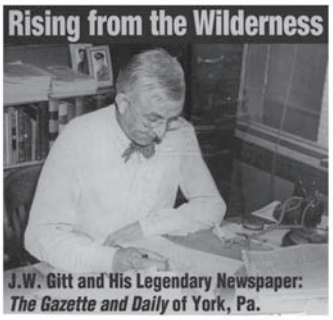

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New biography explores maverick small-town Pennsylvania publisher J.W. Gitt and his newspaper's support of the Progressive movement and civil rights and opposition to the Cold War and Vietnam War. Author Mary A. Hamilton, a retired journalism professor at St. Bonaventure, authoritatively tells how Gitt's Gazette disseminated "the news all the time without fear or favor, bias or prejudice."

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be heroic and then lambaste them for failing. Cosby and Poussaint give a nod to the difficulties of life for impoverished and working-class blacks who struggle to get by on mediocre wages, in insecure jobs, with less and less support from a punitive welfare state and with notoriously troubled schools. But the duo's solution is part of the problem. Heroic efforts at self-uplift might redeem a handful of lucky people, but it will take more than turning off rap music, giving up expensive sneakers and listening to Grandpa to take on the unfinished business of racial inequality.

Cosby is one of a beleaguered rank of black public figures—others being Clarence Thomas, Condoleezza Rice, William Julius Wilson, Michael Jackson and O.J. Simpson (before he was tried for murder)—who have been branded as race traitors. In his book-length essay *Sellout*, Harvard law professor Randall Kennedy offers a historical typology of Black Judases, Benedict Arnolds, House Negroes and Oreos, among them blacks who helped thwart slave rebellions, black men who have married white women, black conservatives, black critics of affirmative action and blacks who have passed as white. In their ranks is Kennedy himself, whose defense of the "N word" in his 2002 book *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*, and his subsequent testimony about the "chameleon-like nature" of the word as an expert witness in a hate-crime case led *Black Commentator* editor and columnist Margaret Kimberley to charge that he was "an opportunistic self-hater with all the establishment's top credentials, a very dangerous enemy indeed." No less than the Council of Black Internal Affairs, publisher of the authoritative *American Directory of Certified Uncle Toms*, charged that the mild-mannered law professor's scholarship was "more harmful than the crimes of common felons."

Kennedy walks a fine line between those who eschew the concept of the sellout as uncivil and those who promiscuously use the term to discredit every slight variation from an imagined racial purity. Kennedy argues that the term "sellout" is a necessary device for the maintenance of a cohesive group identity, and it sometimes furthers the goals of racial justice. Sometimes, blacks need to close ranks to protect their interests. Among those Kennedy identifies as justifiably ostracized are William Hannibal Thomas, Otterbein College's first black student and author of *The American Negro, What He Was, What He Is and What He Will Become*, a 1901 book beloved by white supremacists for its argument that blacks were "an illiterate race, in which ignorance, cowardice, folly, and idleness are rife." Kennedy provocatively contends that the Montgomery bus boycott succeeded because blacks who were indifferent to the protests walked to work or joined carpools for fear of being denounced as sellouts. Kennedy even exculpates Clarence Thomas, "a charter member of the 'Sell Out Hall of Shame.'" Kennedy argues that Thomas's jurisprudence is misguided, his aversion to civil rights troubling and his rejection of the affirmative action programs that benefited him in college and law school hypocritical. Nonetheless, Kennedy sees Thomas as a genuine "race man," committed in his own misguided way to bettering his people. Kennedy argues that even Thomas's staunchest critics, such as the late federal judge A. Leon Higginbotham and UCLA law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, presented no evidence of "intentional misconduct on Thomas's part." No intention, no guilt. Thomas remains inside the circle of blackness.

Kennedy's exceedingly generous and controversial treatment of Thomas is indicative of the fundamental problem with his attempt to redeem the term "sellout." The problems facing black America will not be solved by drawing a tighter circle around "true" black people with "true" black beliefs or widening the circle of "us" to include the likes of Thomas. Intentions should matter far less than results. Reinforcing racial essentialism—which is what the concept of the sellout essentially does—or wasting time reading the minds of alleged race traitors and backsliders does not undermine racial oppression. Clarence Thomas is no more or less a sellout of black interests than fellow Justices Antonin Scalia, Samuel Alito or John Roberts. There may be some psychic relief in naming Uncle Toms, but it is a political dead end to quibble over authenticity rather than to challenge bad ideas and public policies with damaging results, regardless of who champions them and the nature of their motives.

In *The Race Card*, Richard Thompson Ford, a professor at Stanford Law School, grapples with our myopic focus on individual racist thoughts and actions rather than persistent structural inequality. Ford chronicles our impoverished racial discourse, in which "cheap theatricality stands in for valuable insight" and "simplistic dogma masquerades as analysis." Though he doesn't use the term, Ford describes a sort of false consciousness wherein personal slights, interpersonal disputes and legitimate differences of opinion are elevated to the status of racism.

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Ford plucks his examples from the garish world of celebrity culture: O.J. Simpson's attorneys painting him as a victim of a racist conspiracy; Oprah Winfrey turning a rude encounter with snobby French salesclerks at an Hermès shop in Paris into a cause célèbre; and rapper Jay-Z's boycott of Cristal Champagne because its corporate flack dissed "'hip hop' culture." There is more than a little sensationalistic fluff padding Ford's accounts of spurious charges of racism (do we really need another rehash of "If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit"?). But when he gets into real-life examples, such as taxi drivers refusing to pick up black passengers (it's the logical consequence of persistent residential segregation, concentrated poverty and crime, not usually the bad intentions of cabdrivers), and the disparate racial impact of Hurricane Katrina (the real villain here is not George Bush but instead systematic racial segregation, the marginalization of the black poor and long-term disinvestment), his insights are bracing. Ford also challenges the slippery ways that aggrieved individuals (including the obese, people with tattoos and piercings, and white critics of affirmative action) have created a politics and jurisprudence of prejudice analogous to racism. "Fat is not the new black," Ford argues, dismantling arguments that when airlines require overweight passengers to pay for two seats or gymnasiums decline to hire a person of size to run an exercise class, it is the equivalent of systematic Jim Crow. "Weightism and looksism aren't problems of social order or of *social* injustice," as were laws that excluded blacks as a group from the full prerogatives of citizenship.

Ford's critique of the race card is rooted in a larger, institutional understanding of racial discrimination. "Our tools for describing, analyzing, and righting racial injustice assume that racial injustices are the work of racists," he writes. Such tools create confusion when applied to what Ford provocatively calls "racism without racists," which is what occurs when people get trapped in the legacies of discriminatory policies. The result is disabling. The scandal-hungry media feast on ridiculous or exaggerated charges of racism while ignoring the real problems of racial inequality in their midst. Whenever the race card gets played, by either a multiculturalist or an opponent of affirmative action, it trivializes racial inequality and oppression and harms the cause of civil rights: "Practices that create a permanent underclass," he writes, "are unjust in a different and more profound way" than isolated, arbitrary acts of prejudice. Fingering a few bigots—

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NEW JERSEY

True Costs of the War on Terror

■ Colonel (ret.) Ann Wright, State Department diplomat turned peace activist, and Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink and Global Exchange, speak at New Jersey Peace Action's fifty-first annual dinner. Sunday, April 27, noon. Regency House, North Pompton Plains, NJ. $50 until April 17; $55 after. For information, call (973) 744-3263 or visit www.njpeaceaction.org.

NEW YORK

Broadening Bioethics: Clinical Ethics, Public Health and Global Health

■ Free lecture by Onora O'Neill, president of the British Academy and professor of philosophy at Cambridge. Wednesday, April 30, 7:30 PM. Discussion and reception to follow. Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street. Presented by the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University and the NYU Center for Bioethics. ASL interpretation provided. Wheelchair accessible. RSVP: (212) 960-0189 or events@yu.edu.

Comedy and the Crash

■ WBAI-FM hosts a festive (and hilarious) evening's exploration of the economy, with acclaimed economist and political columnist Paul Krugman and comedian and social/political oracle Reno on Tuesday, May 6, at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. To purchase $25/$50 tickets, call (800) 838-3006 or visit www.wbai.org.

rightly or wrongly—does nothing to challenge pervasive educational and housing segregation, the black-white wealth and health gaps, or the disproportionate impact of the prison-industrial complex on young black men.

If there is one lesson to be learned from the past half-century of struggle for racial equality, it is that accusing elite blacks of selling out, calling on poor blacks to shape up or ship out and making a high-minded effort to change the hearts and minds of white Americans have not fundamentally reshuffled the deck of racial inequality in America, especially when black interests threaten white power and privilege. Change did not come only because of high-minded rhetoric or hope. It took the coercive power of the federal government and courts to desegregate schools. The opening of the American workplace did not happen because the shingles fell from the eyes of racist employers. It took grassroots activism and the threat of disruption, along with litigation and the power of regulation, to break down Jim Crow on the factory floor and in the corporate office.

The struggle for racial equality and its partial and incomplete victories are forgotten in our confused time. The politics of race in 2008 is, more than ever, a politics of national redemption through personal transformation. It is all strangely removed from the experience of most black and white Americans. Despite more than a half-century of progress on racial matters, rates of black-white segregation remain incredibly high; neighborhoods and public schools in the North and South remain separate and unequal (and, despite our myths of progress, they are resegregating); and blacks fare worse than whites on nearly every measure of health, well-being and success. Nearly half of African-American children live in poverty, and there are more black men in prison than in college. Black households have on average only 10 percent of the wealth of white households. The current housing crisis affects all Americans, but blacks are disproportionately represented in the ranks of those with subprime loans and foreclosed properties. All of these amount to a crisis—but one that is almost wholly absent from the political agenda. So long as the battle for racial justice continues to be fought on the battleground of hearts and minds, so long as it misinterprets the gauzy politics of symbolism and rhetoric as victory, and so long as it holds out the misguided hope that ferreting out the last hard-core racists or sellouts will transform American life, then the day when "we shall overcome" will remain a distant dream. ■

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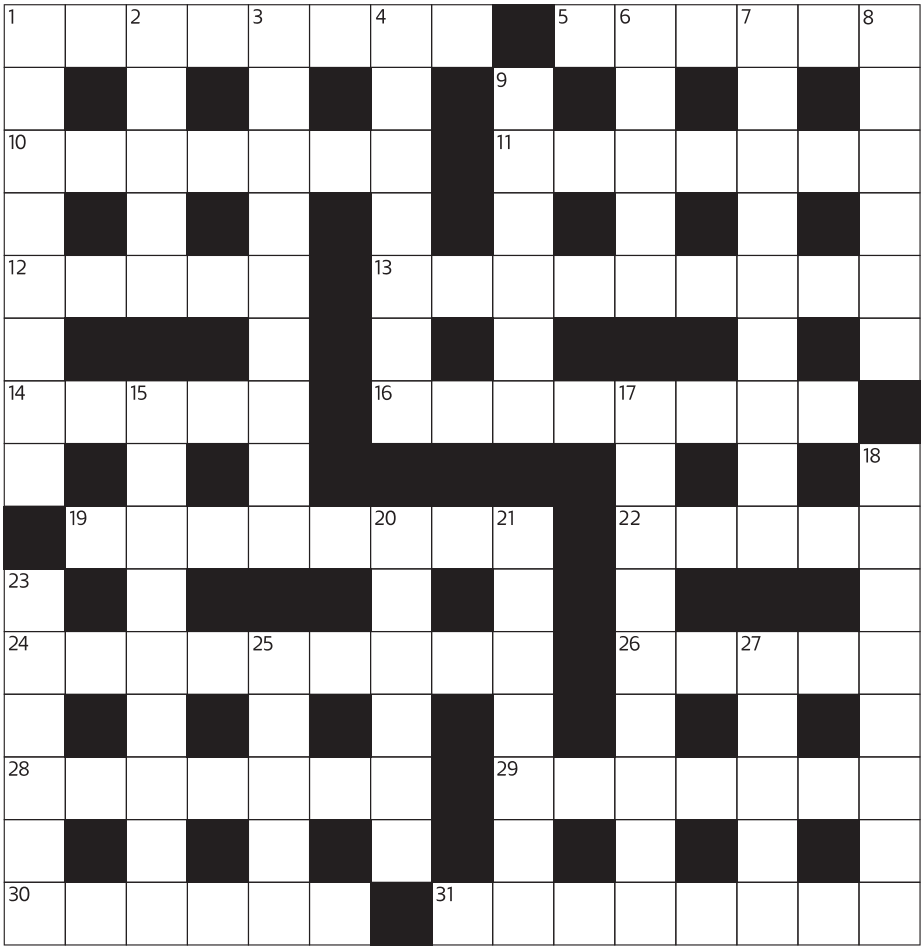

ACROSS

1 and **5** One may gripe without practical experience. (Doesn't stand to reason, negatively—something like a Monday morning quarterback.) (8,6)

10 A magnificent character, a number otherwise at a different zone. (7)

11 One hears it's the guy who throws you out, but it's only part of the game. (7)

12 A mixture of oil—or part of the book that talks about it. (5)

13 Implicit meanings from obvious people? (9)

14 Paper children? (5)

16 People enter the office because of it. (8)

19 What we swing when we run—building up things to throw at each other. (4,4)

22 Out of uniform. (5)

24 The wrong name at the junction does wrongly get such wormy results. (9)

26 Offers a kind of baglike structure to a little company, with one in an important case years ago. (5)

28 It's nothing to an automobile in a version here that might offer a sweet tune. (7)

29 It sounds like a better than average deal—and could be the last word! (7)

30 Steven gets upset by such happenings! (6)

31 Proving a call for help is about the most appropriate word—but it might be a help in case of fire. (8)

DOWN

1, 23 and **20** Anything goes in the bailiwicks of Venus and Mars! (4,4,2,4,3,3)

2 A large number spoken in what could be a very ethical principle. (5)

3 Eaves, possibly, but they don't offer you much of a welcome after a night on the town. (9)

4 Form of a chemical element—and I thus take in too much refreshment with it! (7)

6 There's nothing in film caused by oxidation, but it's a way to get someone out of bed. (5)

7 Disrobing and starting to fly. (6,3)

8 Automobile on the curve—perhaps hugging such. (6)

9 A short month comes up in one, so go along with the suggestion. (6)

15 Involved in the football procedure, with the leg commonly coming up in such bad crimes. (9)

17 Bon mot set randomly on this for one who is not quick. (9)

18 Such men have suffered a personal loss, with an important point showing when I would shortly get worse, perhaps. (8)

20 See 1

21 They're far from flag officers, despite the implication! (7)

23 See 1

25 Give a spit to Oliver, for example. (5)

27 The measure of a little bear on it? (5)

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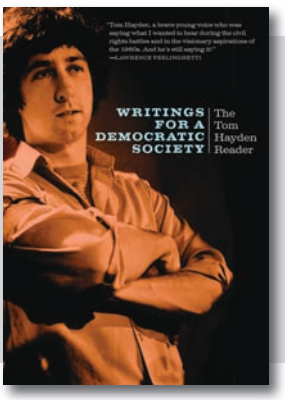

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